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THE

COMPLETE WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS

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THE

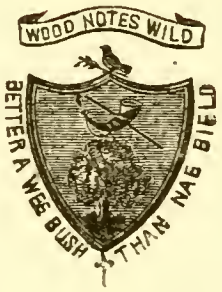
COMPLETE WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS

(SELF-INTERPRETING)

ILLUSTRATED WITH SIXTY ETCHINGS
AND WOOD CUTS, MAPS AND FACSIMILES



VOLUME V

PART II

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([11]) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

EDINBURGH, *20th August* 1793.

BRAVISSIMO! I say. It *is* an excellent song. There is not a single line that could be altered. Of the two lines—"O my love Annie's very bonie!" and "O dearly do I love thee, Annie!" I prefer the latter decidedly. Till I received this song, I had half resolved not to include *Allan Water* in the collection, and for this reason, that it bears such a near resemblance to a much finer air—at least, a greater favorite of mine —*Galashiels*, or "Ah, the poor shepherd's mournful fate;" the beginning is almost quite the same.

I have made up a correct list of my 100 airs, of which I shall send you a copy in the course of a few weeks. It is my fixed intention not to exceed that number; by going farther, I should only be induced to take a number of trifling airs, and so swell both the size and price of the book beyond bounds. And I find my list contains every fine air that is known of the serious and pastoral kind, besides two or three never before published—all diamonds of the water.

I stand pledged to furnish English verses along with every Scottish song, and I must fulfil what I have promised; but I certainly have got into a scrape if you do not stand my friend. A couple of stanzas to each air will do as well as half a dozen; and to an imagination so infinitely fruitful as yours this will not be a Herculean labor. The airs too are all so perfectly familiar to you, and the original verses so much your favorites, that no poet living is qualified to add congenial stanzas, even in English, so much as you are.

I am very glad that you are to revise "Let me in this ae night." I put a much greater value upon this beautiful air than either "Allan Water," or "Logan Water." So it is also with "Cauld Kail in Aberdeen;" I have always considered it among the most pleasing of our melodies. When you first sent me "O Poortith cauld," I took the liberty to observe that I thought it too querulous and despondent for the air. I would

* The holograph is possessed by Mr. Paterson, Publisher, Edinburgh. It is the solitary specimen of Thomson's letters to our poet that is known to exist; and its preservation can be accounted for only on the ground that it had fallen aside from the rest of the series, and was not returned to Thomson with the others after the death of Burns. It formed one of a parcel of MSS. connected with the poet's matters, which at one time were in the hands of Dr. Maxwell, Dumfries.

very fain have something in your best manner for it. There is not an air existing better calculated for telling a pretty tale of love; and therefore I hope that in this propitious season you will think of it some evening under the Thorn tree that witnessed the birth of your *Allan Water*. Remember also, when the Muse and you are "in fit retreats for wooing," that fine ballad-tune, "Laddie, lie near me."

I am sorry you cannot think of furnishing a sweet concluding stanza or two for "Down the burn, Davie;" you will surely allow that however pleasing the description beginning "Till baith at length impatient grown," it is altogether improper for publication; more particularly in a collection that assumes to itself the merit of purification.

I have sent by the Dumfries carrier (carriage paid) a parcel addressed to you containing a set of the Sonatas and Songs for Mr. Riddell of Woodley Park; the same for a Mr. Boyd who wrote some weeks ago to Mr. Hill about them; a set of the songs to Mr. Gordon, and a set of both for our friend Mr. Clarke. Will you give these to a porter (I mean the two first-named) and send the others at your convenience.

Yours cordially, G. THOMSON.

P.S.—I think as you do, that "Oran-gaoil" is a beautiful tune. I have put it in my list, and propose attaching it to Dr. Blacklock's verses, "Since robb'd of all my soul holds dear."

(22) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

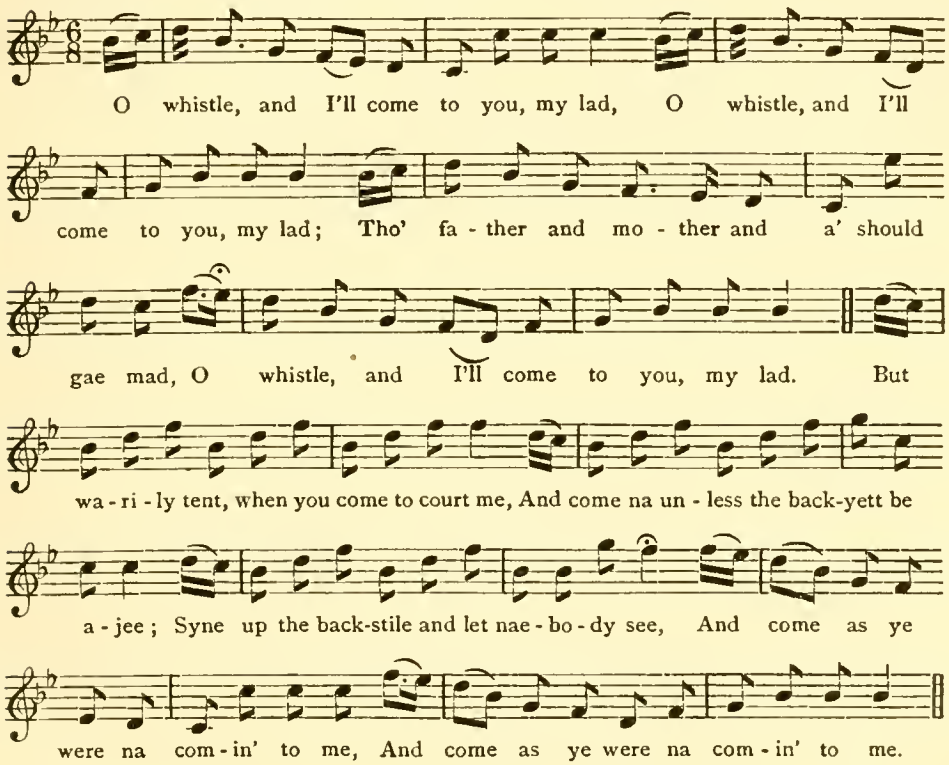
YOU may readily trust, my dear Sir, that any exertion in my power is heartily at your service. But one thing I must hint to you: the very name of Peter Pindar is of great service to your publication; so get a verse from him now and then, though I have no objection, as well as I can, to bear the burden of the business.

Is "Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad," one of your airs? I admire it much; and yesterday I set the following verses to it. Urbani, whom I have met with here, begged them of me, as he admires the air

much; but as I understand that he looks with rather an evil eye on your work, I did not choose to comply. However, if the song does not suit your taste, I may possibly send it him. He is, *entre nous*, a narrow, conceited creature; but he sings so delightfully, that whatever he introduces at your concert must have immediate celebrity. The set of the air which I had in my eye is in Johnson's *Museum*, No. 106.

O WHISTLE AND I'LL COME TO YOU.

With Spirit.

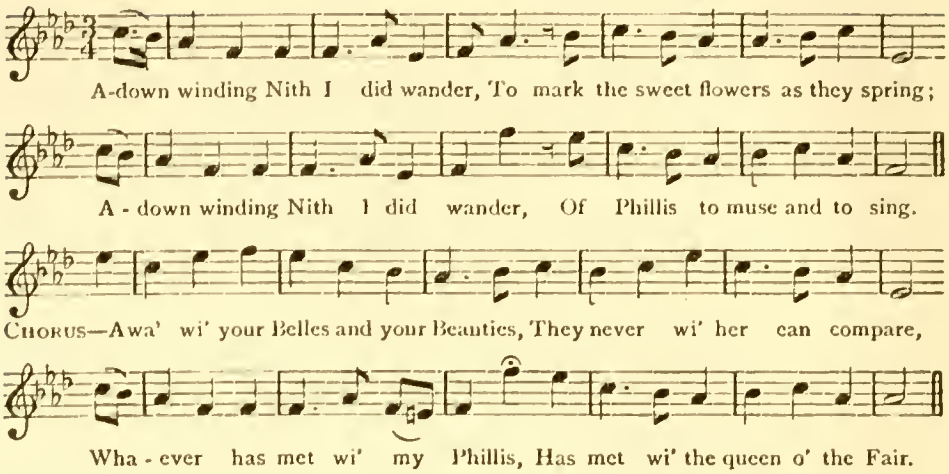


(*See* page 177, Vol. IV.)

Another favorite air of mine is, "The muckin' o' Geordie's byre." When sung slow with expression, I have wished that it had had better poetry: that, I have endeavored to supply as follows:—

PHILLIS, THE QUEEN O' THE FAIR.

ANDANTE. TUNE—"The Mucking o' Geordie's Byre."



(*See* page 178, Vol. IV.)

Mr. Clarke begs you to give Miss Phillis a corner in your book, as she is a particular flame of his. She is a Miss P. M.,* sister to "Bonnie Jean." They are both pupils of his. You shall hear from me, the very first grist I get from my rhyming-mill.

(23) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[28] *August*, 1793.

THAT tune, "Cauld Kail," is such a favorite of yours, that I once more roved out yesterevening for a gloamin'-shot at the muses;† when the muse that presides o'er the shores of Nith, or rather my old inspiring dearest nymph, Coila, whispered me the

* Phillis M'Murdo. See before. The original MS. contained the following additional stanza, which for some reason was deleted:—

"The primrose is o'er for the season,
But mark where the violet is blown;
How modest it peeps from the covert,
So Modesty sure is her own!"

† "'Gloamin'—twilight, probably from glooming. A beautiful poetic word, which ought to be adopted in England. A gloamin'-shot, a twilight interview." —CURRIE.

following. I have two reasons for thinking that it was my early, sweet, simple inspirer that was by my elbow, "smooth gliding without step," and pouring the song on my glowing fancy. In the first place, since I left Coila's native haunts, not a fragment of a poet has arisen to cheer her solitary musings, by catching inspiration from her; so I more than suspect that she has followed me hither, or at least makes me occasional visits; secondly, the last stanza of this song I send you is the very words that Coila taught me many years ago, and which I set to an old Scots reel in Johnson's *Museum.*

COME, LET ME TAKE THEE TO MY BREAST.

MODERATE. TUNE—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen."

Come, let me take thee to my breast, And pledge we ne'er shall sun - der;

And I shall spurn as vil - est dust The warld's wealth and gran - deur:

And do I hear my Jea - nie own, That e - qual trans-ports move her?

I ask for dear - est life a - lone, That I may live to love her.

(*See* page 180, Vol. IV.)

If you think the above will suit your idea of your favorite air, I shall be highly pleased. "The last time I came o'er the moor" I cannot meddle with, as to mending it; and the musical world have been so long accustomed to Ramsay's words, that a different song, though positively superior, would not be so well received. I am not fond of choruses to songs, so I have not made one for the foregoing.

Apropos, there is a song of mine in the 3d vol. of the *Museum* which would suit "Dainty Davie." Tell

me how it will suit. It begins, "O were I on Parnassus Hill."

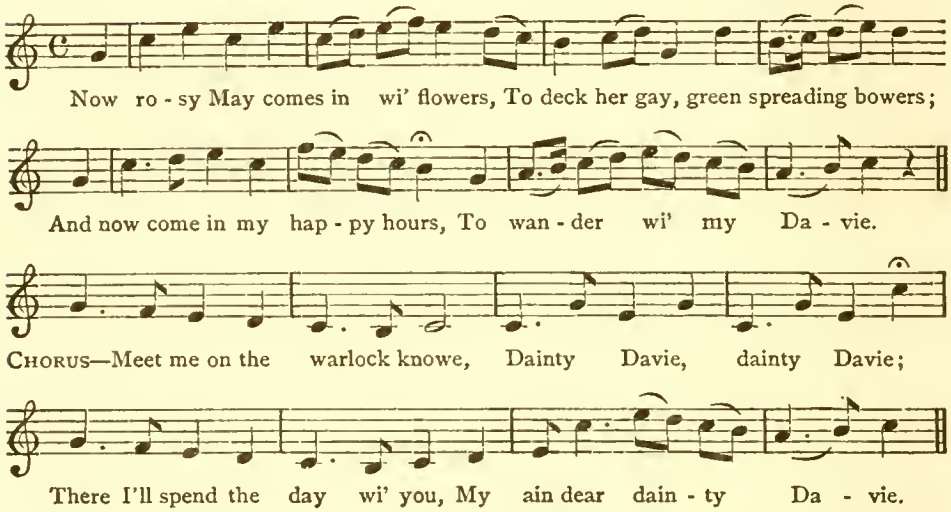
Let me have the list of your first hundred songs as soon as possible. I am ever, my dear Sir, yours sincerely, ROBT. BURNS.

(24) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[28] *August*, 1793.

DAINTY DAVIE.

LIVELY. TUNE—"Dainty Davie."



(*See* page 181, Vol. IV.)

MY DEAR SIR,—I have written you already by to-day's post, where I hinted at a song of mine which might suit "Dainty Davie." I have been looking over another and a better song of mine in the *Museum*, which I have altered as follows, and which I am persuaded will please you. The words "Dainty Davie" glide so sweetly in the air that, to a Scots ear, any song to it, without *Davie* being the hero, would have a lame effect.

So much for Davie. The chorus, you know, is to the low part of the tune. See Clarke's set of it in the *Museum*. Yours, R. B.

N.B.—In the *Museum* they have drawled out the tune to twelve lines of poetry, which is d——d nonsense. Four lines of song, and four of chorus, is the way.

(12) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 1*st Sept.*, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,—Since writing you last, I have received half a dozen songs, with which I am delighted beyond expression. The humor and fancy of "Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad," will render it nearly as great a favorite as "Duncan Gray." "Come, let me take thee to my breast," "Adown winding Nith," and "By Allan stream," &c., are full of imagination and feeling, and sweetly suit the airs for which they are intended. "Had I a cave on some wild distant shore," is a striking and affecting composition. Our friend, to whose story it refers, read it with a swelling heart, I assure you. The union we are now forming, I think, can never be broken; these songs of yours will descend with the music to the latest posterity, and will be fondly cherished so long as genius, taste, and sensibility exist in our island.

While the muse seems so propitious, I think it right to inclose a list of all the favors I have to ask of her—no fewer than twenty and three! I have burdened the pleasant Peter with as many as it is probable he will attend to: most of the remaining airs would puzzle the English poet not a little; they are of that peculiar measure and rhythm, that they must be familiar to him who writes for them. G. T.

(25) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[In the poet's letter, No. 23 of this correspondence, he concludes with the request, "Let me have the list of your first hundred songs as soon as possible." The present ponderous letter is undated—indeed the writing of it must have required many sittings; but as Thomson acknowledges receipt of it in his letter of 12th September, while the correspondents are in the heart of their controversy about the alterations on "Bruce's Address to his Troops," we now introduce it, rather than let it interrupt that discussion.]

I HAVE received your list, my dear Sir, and here go my observations on it :—

No. 1. "An thou wert my ain." I have not Pinkerton, but before me is Witherspoon's first vol. (entitled "Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs and Heroic Ballads"). I have three songs to this air, and with the same chorus :—

1st.—"Of race divine thou needs must be."
2nd.—"Like bees that suck the morning dew."
3rd.—"As round the elm th' enamor'd vine."

Of these, all of them good, the first, in my opinion, is the best. The English song, "Ah, dear Marcella," &c., is not in my copy of "The Charmer."

No. 2. "Down the burn, Davie." I have this moment tried an alteration, leaving out the last half of the third stanza, and the first half of the last stanza, thus :—

As down the burn they took their way,
  And thro' the flowery dale;
His cheeks to hers he aft did lay,
  And love was ay the tale.
With "Mary, when shall we return,
  Sic pleasure to renew?"
Quoth Mary, "Love, I like the burn,
  And ay shall follow you."

No. 3. Nothing to remark.

No. 4. "Katherine Ogie." I should like to see this in your next number.

No. 5. "Low down in the Broom," in my opinion, deserves more properly a place among your lively and humorous songs. I shall by and by point out some in this last list which rather belong to the first.

No. 6. "Lewie Gordon." Jamie Dawson is a beautiful ballad, but is of great length; cannot you, for sake of economy in the press-work, substitute a short one?

No. 7. Nothing.

No. 8. "Cowden-Knowes." Remember, in your index, that the song is pure English, beginning, "When summer comes, the swains on Tweed," is the production of Crawford. Robert was his Christian name.

Nos. 9 and 10. Nothing.

No. 11. "Bonie Dundee." Your objection of the stiff line is just; but mending my coloring would spoil the likeness; so the picture must stand as it is [see page 148, Vol. IV., "True-hearted was he"].

No. 12. "The last time I cam o'er the moor." Why encumber yourself with another English song to this tune? Ramsay's is English already to your hand.

No. 13. "Flowers of the Forest." The verses, "I've seen the smiling," &c., with a few trifling alterations, putting "no more" for "nae mair," and the word "turbid" in a note at the bottom of the page, to shew the meaning of the word "drumly," the song will serve you for an English set. A small sprinkling of Scotticisms is no objection to an English reader.

No. 14. Nothing, except that "Despairing beside a clear stream," is a very popular song to its own tune. Would it not be better to have another in the same measure (there are plenty of them) which has never been set to music?

No. 15. Nothing.

No. 16. "Thro' the Wood, Laddie." I am decidedly of opinion that both in this, and "There'll never be peace till Jamie come hame," the second, or high part of the tune (being a repetition of the first part, an octave higher), is only for instrumental music, and would be much better omitted in singing.

No. 17. "Lord Gregory." Please insert mine in your next number; two or three copies of the song have got into the world, and I am afraid lest they find their way to some pilferers.

No. 18. "Thou art gane awa frae me, Mary." See the best set of this song in the *Museum*.

Nos. 19, 20, 21. Nothing.

No. 22. "Peggy, I must love thee." Please let me take this into consideration. It will do for your third number.

No. 24. "Logan Water," shall wait my revisal; only one passage I think faulty. "Cruel joys" is a d—d stupid expression. Nos. 25, 26, 27. Nothing.

No. 28. "My lodging is on the cold ground." Please let it wait your third number to gain time.

Nos. 29, 30. Nothing.

No. 31. "Fair Helen" is not an air that charms me.

No. 32. "Bonie Jean," nothing.*

No. 33. "Bonie Jean," the second. Change the name to "There was a Lass, and she was fair," which, by the by, is the old name of the air. Do make a point of publishing this song to its own tune, and in your next number, you will oblige me by it.† Please likewise insert No. 11 (Bonie Dundee) in your next number.

No. 34. "Gil Morrice," I am unalterably for leaving out altogether. It is a plaguey length, which will put you to great press expense, the air itself is never sung; and its place can be well supplied with one of two fine songs which are not at all in your list, "Craigieburn Wood," and "Roy's Wife." The first, besides its intrinsic merit, has novelty; and the last has high merit as well as great celebrity; of the last I have the original, set as well as written by the lady who composed it, and it is superior to any edition of the song which the public has yet seen.‡

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* This is a song by Ramsay set to a melody (No. 54 of Johnson) called "Bonie Jean of Aberdeen."

† As elsewhere noted, it is to be regretted that Thomson, instead of adopting this now lost melody so highly recommended by Burns, threw it aside, and set the words to the air, "Willie was a wanton wag."

‡ This original MS. of the authoress, Mrs. Grant of Carron, has strayed somewhere. It is said to have contained a closing verse, thus:—

"But Roy's years are three times mine, I'm sure his days'll no be mony;
An when the carle's dead an gane, she'll maybe rew an tak her Johnny."

No. 35. Nothing.

No. 36. Is the real tune of "Hughie Graham," as sung in some places; in others it is sung to a different and very pleasing little air, yet unknown to the world. I neglected to take down the notes when I met with it, and now it is out of my power. This air you will find in Oswald's Collection, Book 8th, under the title "Drimen Duff."

No. 37. "Laddie, lie near me," must *lie by me* for some time. I do not know the air; and until I am complete master of a tune, in my own singing (such as it is), I never can compose for it. My way is: I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression; then choose my theme; begin one stanza; when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for subjects in nature around me that are in unison and harmony with the cogitations of my fancy and workings of my bosom; humming every now and then the air with the verses I have framed. When I feel my Muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind-legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes on. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way. What damn'd egotism!

No. 38. Nothing.

No. 39. "Highland Laddie." The old set will please a mere Scots ear best; and the new an Italianised one. There is a third, and what Oswald calls "The Old Highland Laddie," which pleases me more than either of them: it is sometimes called "Jinglin Johnie;" that being the air of an old humorous bawdy song of that name—you will find it in the *Museum*, "I hae been at Crookieden," &c. I would

advise you, in this musical quandary, to offer up your prayers to the Muses for inspiring direction; and, in the meantime, waiting for this direction, bestow a libation to Bacchus; and there is not a doubt but you will hit on a judicious choice. *Probatum est.*

No. 40. Nothing.

No. 41. "O bonie Lass, will ye lie in a Barrack," must infallibly have Scots verses.

No. 42. Unknown.

No. 43. "Wae's my heart that we should sunder." Do you know a song in the *Museum*, "Go fetch to me a pint o' wine, and fill it in a silver tassie?" It is a song of mine, and I think not a bad one. It precisely suits the measure of this air;* you might set it to this, and for an English song, take either, "With broken words," &c., or "Speak on, speak thus," &c.: this last is the best; but remember I am no Dictator: *ad libitum* is the word.

No. 44 to 50. Nothing.

No. 51. "The bonie Brucket Lassie." I enclose you a song to it, as I think it should be set, and with a better effect than the modulation in the *Museum*, where it first appeared, and whence everybody else has borrowed it. The tune is a very early acquaintance of mine. The verses, if they deserve the name (in the *Museum*), are the work of a gentleman known by the name of "Balloon Tytler."

No. 52. Nothing.

No. 53. "Banks of the Dee." Leave it out entirely; 'tis rank Irish; every other Irish air you have adopted is in the Scots taste; but, Langolee!—why, it is no more like a Scots air than Lunardi's balloon is like Diogenes' tub. I grant you that it is pretty; but why don't you take also the "Humors of Glen,"

* No. 131 of Johnson. The air is given in Thomson's collection to Ramsay's song, "With broken words," &c. It therefore appears that Burns was not quite satisfied with the melody [No. 231 of Johnson] to "The silver tassie." See page 26, Vol. III. of this edition.

"Captain O'Kean," "Coolim," and many other Irish airs much more beautiful than it? Let me recommend to you, in place of this blackguard Irish jig, our beautiful Scots air, "Saw ye na my Peggy," a tune worth ten thousand of it; or, "Fy! let us a' to the Bridal," worth twenty thousand of it.

No. 54. Nothing.

No. 55. "White Cockade." I have forgot the Cantata you allude to, as I kept no copy, and indeed did not know that it was in existence; however, I remember that none of the songs pleased myself, except the last—something about:—

> Courts for cowards were erected,
> Churches built to please their priests.*

But there is another song of mine, a composition of early life, in the *Museum*, beginning:—

> Nae gentle dames, tho' e'er sae fair,

which suits the measure, and has tolerable merit.

No. 56. It suits best to make it, "Whistle, and I'll come t' ye, my lad."

No. 57. "Auld Sir Symon" I must beg you to keep out, and put in its place "The Quaker's Wife."

No. 58. Nothing.

No. 59. "Dainty Davie" I have heard sung nineteen thousand, nine hundred, and ninety-nine times, and always with the chorus to the low part of the tune; and nothing (since a Highland wench in the Cowgate once bore me three bastards at a birth) has surprised me so much as your opinion on this subject. If it will not suit as I proposed, we will lay two

* The reader will recollect that the poet gave his only MS. of the *Jolly Beggars* to the Laird of Craigengillan's factor. After being shown about in Edinburgh for some time, it was acquired by Mr. Thomas Stewart, printer, Glasgow, who published it in 1799, and again, in 1823, in *fac-simile*. The valuable holograph is now the property of the poet's nephew, Mr. Gilbert Burns of Knockmaroon Lodge, Dublin.

of the stanzas together, and then make the chorus follow.

No. 60. "Fee him, father, fee him." I enclose you Fraser's set of this tune; when he plays it slow, in fact he makes it the language of despair. I shall here give you two stanzas in that style, merely to try if it will be any improvement. Were it possible, in singing, to give it half the pathos which Fraser gives it in playing, it would make an admirably pathetic song. I do not give these verses for any merit they have. I composed them at the time in which "Patie Allan's mither de'ed—that was about the back o' midnight," and by the lee-side of a bowl of punch, which had overset every mortal in company except the *Hautbois* and the Muse.

THOU HAST LEFT ME EVER.

Tune—"Fee him, Father."

Thou hast left me ever, Jamie,
  Thou hast left me ever;
Thou hast left me ever, Jamie,
  Thou hast left me ever:
Aften thou hast vow'd that death
  Only should us sever;
Now thou'st left thy lass for ay—
I maun see thee never, Jamie,
  I'll see thee never, &c.

(*See* p. 187, Vol. IV.)

No. 61. "Jocky said to Jenny" I would discard, and in its place would put "There's nae Luck about the House," which is a very pleasant air, and positively the finest love-ballad in that style in the Scots, or perhaps any other language. "When she cam ben, she bobbit," is a more beautiful air by much than either of them, and in the *andante* way, would make a charming sentimental ballad.

No. 62. Nothing.

No. 63. "Maggie Lauder" is a good tune; but there is—I don't know what, of vulgarism about it; at least to me it has always that effect. There is an English song to which it is set in the *Museum* (No. 98).

Nos. 64, 65, and 66. Nothing.

No. 67. "Saw ye my Father?" is one of my greatest favorites. The evening before last, I wandered out, and began a tender song, in what I think is its native style. I must premise, that the old way, and the way to give most effect, is to have no starting-note, as the fiddlers call it, but to burst at once into the pathos. Every country girl sings, "Saw ye my Father?" &c. So also in line third, "*I* saw not your," &c. This last, to be sure, hurts the poetry ("*I* saw," instead of "I *saw*"), but I am speaking of the air.

My song is but just begun; and I should like, before I proceed, to know your opinion of it. I have sprinkled it with the Scots dialect, but it may be easily turned into correct English.

FRAGMENT.

Tune—"Saw ye my Father?"

Where are the joys I hae met in the morning,
That danc'd to the lark's early sang?
Where is the peace that awaited my wand'ring,
At e'enin the wild woods amang?

Nae mair a-winding the course o' yon river,
And making sweet flowerets sae fair;
Nae mair I trace the light footsteps o' Pleasure,
But Sorrow and sad-sighing Care.

Is it that Simmer's forsaken our vallies,
And grim, surly Winter is near?
No, no, the bees humming round the gay roses
Proclaim it the pride o' the year.

Fain wad I hide what I fear to discover,
Yet lang, lang too well hae I known
A' that has caus-ed the wreck in my bosom
Is—Jenny, fair Jenny alone.

Cetera desunt.

No. 68. Nothing.

No. 69. "Todlin Hame." Urbani mentioned an idea of his, which has long been mine, that this air is highly susceptible of pathos; accordingly, you will soon hear him at your concert try it to a song of mine in the *Museum*, "Ye Banks and Braes o' bonie Doon." Clarke has told me what a creature he is; but if he will bring any more of our tunes from darkness into light, I will be pleased.

No. 70. Nothing.

No. 71. "Geordie's Byre." Call the tune so, for decency's sake. I agree with you that the song will be better to want the stanza, "The primrose is o'er for the season." I'll rather write a new song altogether than make this English. The sprinkling of Scotch in it, while it is but a sprinkling, gives it an air of rustic *naïveté* which time will rather increase than diminish.

Nos. 72, 73. Nothing.

No. 74, and last. "Tranent Muir" I am altogether averse to. The song is fine and eke the tune; but it is not of a piece with the rest of your pieces. Instead of it, allow me to mention a particular favorite of mine which you will find in the *Museum:* "I had a horse, and I had nae mair." It is a charming song, and I know the story of the ballad. One song more, and I have done—"Auld Lang Syne." The air is but mediocre; but the following song—the old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air:

AULD LANG SYNE.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?

Chorus—For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne, &c.

(*See* page 24, Vol. III.)

Now, I suppose, I have tired your patience fairly. You must, after all is over, have a number of ballads, properly so called. Gil Morrice, Tranent Muir, M'Pherson's Farewell, Battle of Sheriffmuir, or "We ran and they ran" (I know the author of this charming ballad, and his history), Hardiknute, Barbara Allan (I can furnish a finer set of this tune than any that has yet appeared);* and besides, do you know that I really have the old tune to which "The Cherry and the Slae" was sung, and which is mentioned as a well-known air in "Scotland's Complaint"—a book published before poor Mary's days? It was then called "The Banks of Helicon;" an old poem which Pinkerton has brought to light. You will see all this in Tytler's "History of Scots Music." The tune, to a learned ear, may have no great merit; but it is a great curiosity. I have a good many original things of this kind.

Good bye to ye! R. B.

* Thomson's set of this melody is the same as Johnson's, published in 1790. The English set of the air, in Ritson, is very inferior.

(26) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

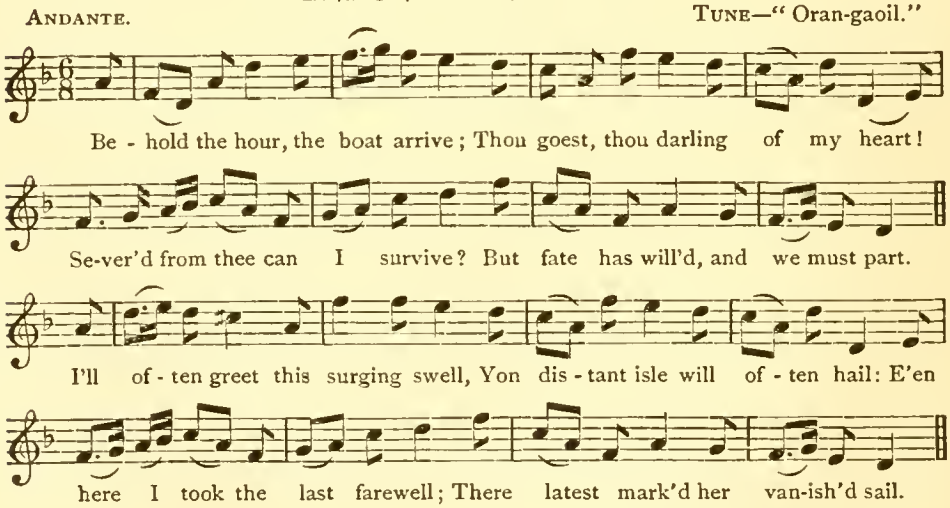
September, 1793.

I DARE say, my dear Sir, that you will begin to think my correspondence is persecution. No matter, I can't help it; a ballad is my hobby-horse; which, though otherwise a simple sort of harmless idiotical beast enough, has yet this blessed headstrong property, that when once it has fairly made off with a hapless wight, it gets so enamored with the tinkle-gingle, tinkle-gingle of its own bells, that it is sure to run poor pilgarlic, the bedlam-jockey, quite beyond any useful point or post in the common race of man.

The following song I have composed for "Oran-gaoil," the Highland air that, you tell me in your last, you have resolved to give a place to in your book. I have this moment finished the song, so you have it glowing from the mint. If it suit you, well!—if not, 'tis also well!

BEHOLD THE HOUR.*

ANDANTE. TUNE—"Oran-gaoil."



(*See* page 185, Vol. IV.)

* Clarinda inspired these verses. She was going to the West Indies.

Bruce's Address to his Army.

"SCOTS, WHA HAE WI' WALLACE BLED."

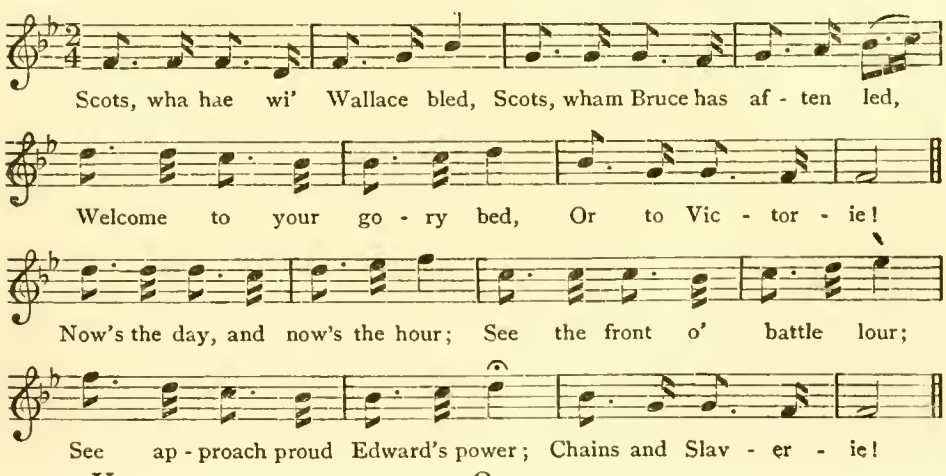
([27]) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

September 1st, 1793.

YOU know that my pretensions to musical taste are merely a few of nature's instincts, untaught and untutored by art. For this reason, many musical compositions, particularly where much of the merit lies in counterpoint, however they may transport and ravish the ears of you connoisseurs, affect my simple lug no otherwise than merely as melodious din. On the other hand, by way of amends, I am delighted with many little melodies which the learned musician despises as silly and insipid. I do not know whether the old air, "Hey, tuttie taitie," may rank among this number; but well I know that, with Frazer's hautboy, it has often filled my eyes with tears. There is a tradition, which I have met with in many places in Scotland, that it was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn. This thought, in my yesternight's evening walk, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of liberty and independence, which I threw into a kind of Scottish ode, fitted to the air, that one might suppose to be the gallant ROYAL SCOT'S address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning.

BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY AT BANNOCKBURN.

BOLDLY. TUNE—"Hey, Tuttie Taitie."



Wha will be a traitor-knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
Let him on wi' me!

By Oppression's woes and pains
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty 's in every blow!
Let us do, or die!

So may God ever defend the cause of truth and liberty, as he did that day! Amen.* R. B.

P.S.—I showed the air to Urbani, who was highly pleased with it, and begged me to make soft verses for it; but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject, till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient, roused my rhyming mania. Clarke's set of the tune, with his bass, you will find in the Museum; though I am afraid that the air is not what will entitle it to a place in your elegant selection. R. B.

* "That Burns, however untaught, was yet in ear and feeling a musician, is clear from the skill with which he adapts his verse to the structure and character of each different strain. Still more strikingly did he prove his fitness for this peculiar task by the sort of instinct with which, in more than one instance, he discerned the real and innate sentiment which an air was calculated to convey, though always before associated with words expressing a totally different feeling. Thus, the air of a ludicrous old song, "Fee him, father, fee him," has been made the medium of one of Burns's most pathetic effusions; while still more marvelously, "Hey, tuttie taitie," has been elevated by him into that heroic strain, "Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled," a song which, in a great national crisis, would be of more avail than all the eloquence of Demosthenes." —*Thomas Moore.*

([13]) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *5th September*, 1793.

I BELIEVE it is generally allowed that the greatest modesty is the sure attendant of the greatest merit. While you are sending me verses that even Shakspeare might be proud to own, you speak of them as if they were ordinary productions! Your heroic ode is to me the noblest composition of the kind in the Scottish language. I happened to dine yesterday with a party of your friends, to whom I read it. They were all charmed with it; entreated me to find out a suitable air for it, and reprobated the idea of giving it a tune so totally devoid of interest or grandeur as "Hey, tuttie taitie." Assuredly, your partiality for this tune must arise from the ideas associated in your mind by the tradition concerning it; for I never heard any person, and I have conversed again and again with the greatest enthusiasts for Scottish airs—I say, I never heard any one speak of it as worthy of notice.

I have been running over the whole hundred airs of which I lately sent you the list; and I think "Lewie Gordon" is the most happily adapted to your ode; at least, with a very slight variation of the fourth line, which I shall presently submit to you. There is in "Lewie Gordon" more of the grand than the plaintive, particularly when it is sung with a degree of spirit, which your words would oblige the singer to give it. I would have no scruple about substituting your ode in room of the song, "Lewie Gordon," which has neither the interest, the grandeur, nor the poetry, that characterize your verses. Now, the variation I have to suggest upon the last line of each verse (the only line too short for the air) is as follows:—

Verse 1. Or to [*glorious*] victory.
2. Chains [*chains*] and slavery.
3. Let him [*let him*] turn and flee.
4. Let him [*bravely*] follow me.
5. But they shall [*they shall*] be free.
6. Let us [*let us*] do or die!

If you connect each line with its own verse, I do not think you will find that either the sentiment or the expression loses any of its energy.

The only line which I dislike in the whole of the song is "Welcome to your gory bed!" Would not another word be preferable to "welcome?" In your next, I will expect to be

informed whether you agree to what I have proposed. The little alterations I submit with great deference.

The beauty of the verses you have made for "Oran Gaoil" will insure celebrity to the air. G. T.

(28) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[*September*, 1793.]

I AM happy, my dear Sir, that my ode pleases you so much. Your idea "honor's bed" is, though a beautiful, a hackney'd idea; so, if you please, we will let the line stand as it is.* I have altered the song as follows:—

BANNOCKBURN: A SONG.

ROBERT BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY.

Tune—"Lewie Gordon."

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to glorious victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Edward! Chains and Slavery!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Traitor! Coward! turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's King and Law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or Free-man fa',
Soger! Hero! on wi' me!

* Chambers has noted his surprise that Burns here answers an objection of Thomson's that has not yet appeared in the correspondence, and suggests that there has been some misprinting or transplanting of Thomson's remarks. He adds that "many such liberties appear to have been taken by the original editor of this correspondence." Thomson must have written a letter between those numbered 13 and 14 which has been withheld, or No. 13 must have contained more than he has thought proper to publish.

By Oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be—shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Forward! let us Do, or Die!!!

N.B.—I have borrowed the last stanza from the common stall edition of Wallace:—

"A false usurper sinks in every foe,
And liberty returns with every blow,"

a couplet worthy of Homer. Yesterday you had enough of my correspondence. The post goes, and my head aches miserably. One comfort! I suffer so much just now in this world for last night's debauch, that I shall escape scot-free for it in the world to come. Amen! R. B.

([14]) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 12*th Sept.* 1793.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your observations on the list of my songs. I am happy to find your ideas so much in unison with my own, respecting the generality of the airs, as well as the verses. About some of them we differ, but there is no disputing about hobbyhorses. I shall not fail to profit by the remarks you make, and to reconsider the whole with attention.

"Dainty Davie" must be sung two stanzas together, and then the chorus; 'tis the proper way. I agree with you, that there may be something of pathos, or tenderness at least, in the air of "Fee him, Father," when performed with feeling; but a tender cast may be given almost to any lively air, if you sing it very slowly, expressively, and with serious words. I am, however, clearly and invariably for retaining the cheerful tunes joined to their own humorous verses, wherever the verses

are passable. But the sweet song for "Fee him, Father," which you began about the back of midnight, I will publish as an additional one. Mr. James Balfour, the king of good fellows, and the best singer of the lively Scottish ballads that ever existed, has charmed thousands of companies with "Fee him, Father," and with "Todlin Hame" also, to the old words, which never should be disunited from either of these airs. Some bacchanals I would wish to discard. "Fy, let us a' to the Bridal," for instance, is so coarse and vulgar, that I think it fit only to be sung in a company of drunken colliers;* and "Saw ye my Father" appears to me both indelicate and silly.

One word with regard to your heroic ode. I think, with great deference to the poet, that a prudent general would avoid saying anything to his soldiers which might tend to make death more frightful than it is. "Gory" presents a disagreeable image to the mind; and to tell them "Welcome to your gory bed," seems rather a discouraging address, notwithstanding the alternative which follows. I have shewn the song to three friends of excellent taste, and each of them objected to this line, which emboldens me to use the freedom of bringing it again under your notice. I would suggest:—

Now prepare for honor's bed,
Or for glorious victory!

G. T.

(29) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

September, 1793.

"WHO shall decide when Doctors disagree?" My ode pleases me so much, that I cannot alter it. Your proposed alterations would, in my opinion, make it tame. I am exceedingly obliged to you for putting me on reconstructing it, as I think I have much improved it. Instead of "Soger! hero!" I will have it to be:—

Caledonian! on wi' me!

I have scrutinised it over and over; and to the world,

* This expression of opinion, in the face of Burns's admiration of the song at page 219, *supra*, is scarcely polite. See the bard's rebuke, pages 235, 236, *infra*.

some way or other, it shall go as it is.* At the same time, it will not in the least hurt me, tho' you leave the song out altogether, and adhere to your first idea of adopting Logan's verses.

I have finished my song to "The Grey Cock," and in English, as you will see. Your objection of a syllable too much for the expression of the air is just; but allow me to say that the mere dividing of a dotted crotchet into a crotchet and quaver, is not a great matter; however, in that I have no pretensions to cope in judgment with you. Of the poetry I speak with confidence; but the music is a business where I hint my ideas with the utmost diffidence.

The old verses have merit, though unequal, and are popular. My advice is to set the air to the old words, and let mine follow as English verses. Here they are:—

---

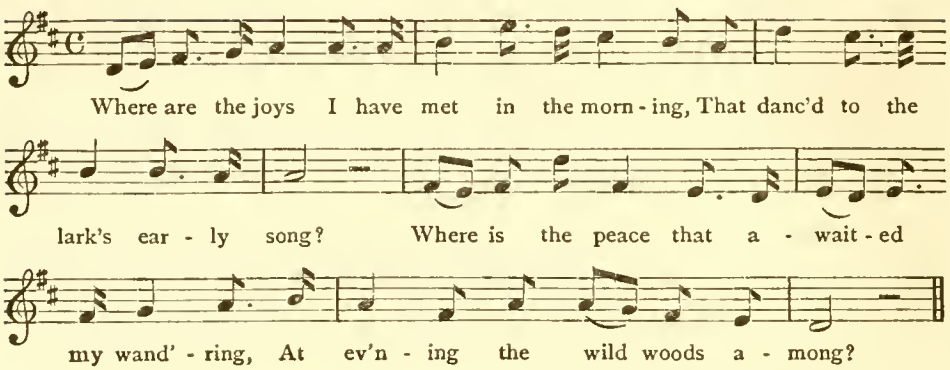
* Dr. Currie has remarked in reference to Thomson's objections to the line, "Welcome to your gory bed," that the "Leader who, in preparing for an engagement, attempts to withdraw his imagination from images of death will probably have but an imperfect success, and is not fitted to stand in the ranks of battle, where the liberties of a kingdom are at issue. Of such men, the conquerors of Bannockburn were not composed. Mr. Thomson's observation, therefore, seems not sufficiently considered."

Thomson published the ode in his second volume, which appeared in July, 1799. It is there set to the air "Lewie Gordon." The public, however, on being made acquainted—through Dr. Currie's edition—with Burns's partiality for the air "Hey, tuttie taitie," and how he had been prevailed on, against his better instincts, to alter and injure his verses, to suit Mr. Thomson's whim for the tune "Lewie Gordon," loudly demanded the restoration of the ode to its original form, and its own thrilling melody. Accordingly, when the third volume of Thomson's collection appeared in 1802, "Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled" was produced in its primal beauty, set to the air for which it had been composed.

Thomson prefaced it with the following note:—"The Poet originally intended this noble strain for the air 'Hey, tuttie taitie;' but, on a suggestion from the Editor of this work, who then thought 'Lewie Gordon' a fitter tune for the words, they were united together, and published in the preceding volume. The Editor, however, having since examined the air 'Hey, tuttie taitie' with more particular attention, frankly owns that he has changed his opinion, and now thinks it much better adapted for giving energy to the poetry than the air of *Lewie Gordon*. It is worthy of remark, that it appears to be the oldest Scottish air, concerning which anything like evidence is to be found."

FAIR JENNY.

SLOW. TUNE—"Saw ye my Father?"



(*See* page 189, Vol. IV.)

Adieu! my dear Sir, the post goes, so I shall defer some other remarks until more leisure. R. B.

(30) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

September, 1793.

I HAVE been turning over some volumes of English songs, to find verses whose measures would suit the airs for which you have allotted me to find English songs. The following I picked up in an old collection, which will suit very well for "Nancy's to the greenwood gane." You must not, my dear Sir, expect all your English songs to have superlative merit, 'tis enough if they are passable:

"The other night, with all her charms,
My ardent passion crowning,
My Celia sank within my arms,
An equal transport owning," &c.

[This is rather a witty song, and will be found in Tom D'Urfey's collection. George Thomson seems to have regarded it as one of Burns's own compositions; for he has written on the margin, "Unpublishable surely! G. T."]

As for the air—"Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad," there is a fine English song for it in Ramsay's

Tea-table Miscellany, beginning, "Ah, Chloe! thou treasure, thou joy of my breast." For "John Anderson, my jo," you have, also in Ramsay's *Miscellany*, an excellent song, beginning—

"What means this niceness now of late?"

In the same *Miscellany* is not a bad song by Crawford to "Peggy, I must love thee," beginning—

"Beneath a beech's grateful shade."

As for English verses to "Geordie's Byre," take the following, altered a trifle from Ramsay,

"O Mary, thy graces and glances,
Thy smiles so enchantingly gay,
And converse bewitchingly charming,
Bright wit and good humor display," &c.

Since I am in the way of amending and abridging, let me recommend the following abridgement of a beautiful poem of Hamilton's, to suit "Tak your auld cloak about ye."

"Alas! the sunny hours are past,
The cheating scene, it will not last;
Let not the flatt'rer Hope persuade;
Ah, must I say, that it will fade!" &c.

For "Willie was a wanton wag," you have a song made on purpose, also by Hamilton, which you will find in Ramsay's *Miscellany*, beginning,

"Willy, ne'er enquire what end."

English verses for "The tither morn, as I forlorn," you have in my song,

"The last time I came o'er the moor,
And left Maria's dwelling."

For "Todlin Hame," take the following old English song, which I daresay is but little known:—

THE PRIMROSE.

Tune—"Todlin Hame."

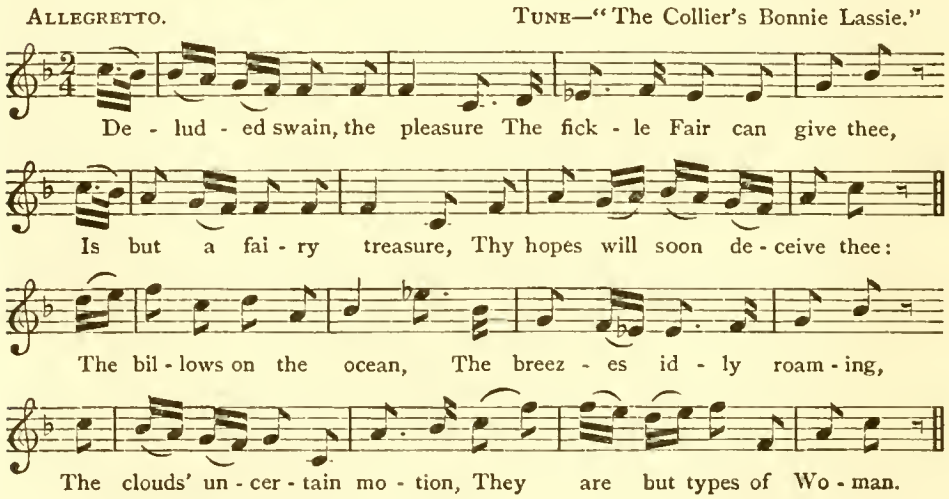
"Dost ask me, why I send thee here,
This firstling of the infant year—
This lovely native of the vale,
That hangs so pensive, and so pale?

"Look on its bending stalk, so weak
That, each way yielding, doth not break,
And see how aptly it reveals
The doubts and fears a lover feels.

"Look on its leaves of yellow hue
Bepearl'd thus with morning dew,
And these will whisper in thine ears
'The sweets of love are wash'd with tears.'"*

N.B.—I have altered it a little.

For "Muirland Willie" you have, in Ramsay's *Tea-table*, an excellent song, beginning, "Ah, why those tears in Nelly's eyes?" Then for "The Collier's Dochter," take the following old bacchanal:—



"Heav'ns! art thou not asham'd
To doat upon a feature?
If Man thou would'st be named,
Despise the silly creature;

* This pretty little piece has been so much altered from the original that, like the bacchanalian verses which follow, it may almost be reckoned as Burns's own.

Go, find an honest fellow;
  Good claret set before thee;
Hold on till thou art mellow,
  And then to bed in glory."

The faulty line in "Logan Water" I mend thus:—

"How can your flinty hearts enjoy
  The widow's tears, the orphan's cry?"

The song otherwise will pass. As to "M'Gregor a Rora," you will see a song of mine to it, with a set of the air superior to yours, in the *Museum*, Vol. II., p. 181. The song begins "Raving winds around her blowing."

Your Irish airs are pretty, but they are rank Irish. If they were like the "Banks of Banna," for instance, though really Irish, yet in the Scotch taste, you might adopt them. Since you are so fond of Irish music, what say you to twenty-five of them, in an additional number? We could find this quantity of charming airs; I will take care that you shall not want songs; and I assure you that you would find it the most saleable of the whole. If you do not approve of "Roy's Wife" for the music's sake, we shall not insert it. "Deil tak the Wars" is a charming song; so is "Saw ye my Peggy?" "There's nae luck about the House" well deserves a place. I cannot say that "O'er the hills and far awa" strikes me as equal to your selection. "This is no my ain House" is a great favorite of mine; and if you will send me your set of it, I shall task my muse to her highest effort. What is your opinion of "I hae laid a herrin in saut?" I like it much. Your Jacobite airs are all pretty, and there are many others of the same kind pretty; but you have not room for them. You cannot, I think, insert "Fy, let us a' to the bridal," to any other words than its own.

What pleases me, as simple and *naive*, disgusts you

as ludicrous and low. For this reason, "Fy, gie me my coggie, Sirs;" "Fy, let us a' to the bridal," with several others of that cast, are to me highly pleasing; while, "Saw ye my Father, or saw ye my Mother?" delights me with its descriptive, simple pathos. Thus, my song, "Ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?" pleases myself so much, that I cannot try my hand at another song to the air; so I shall not attempt it. I know you will laugh at all this; but "ilka man wears his belt his ain gate."

Yours, R. BURNS.

(31) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[29*th October*, 1793.]

YOUR last letter, my dear Thomson, was indeed laden with heavy news. Alas! poor Erskine!* The recollection that he was a coadjutor in your publication, has till now scared me from writing you, or turning my thoughts on composing for you.

I am pleased that you are reconciled to "The Quaker's Wife," though, by the by, an old Highland gentleman, and a deep antiquarian, tells me that it is a Gaelic air, and known by the name of "Leiger 'm choss," which name you may, if you think fit, prefix as the name of the tune. It bears that name in the west country, where there is still half a stanza of the song preserved, which I take to have been the chorus. The Gaelic phrase they have corrupted into "Liggeram Coss:"—

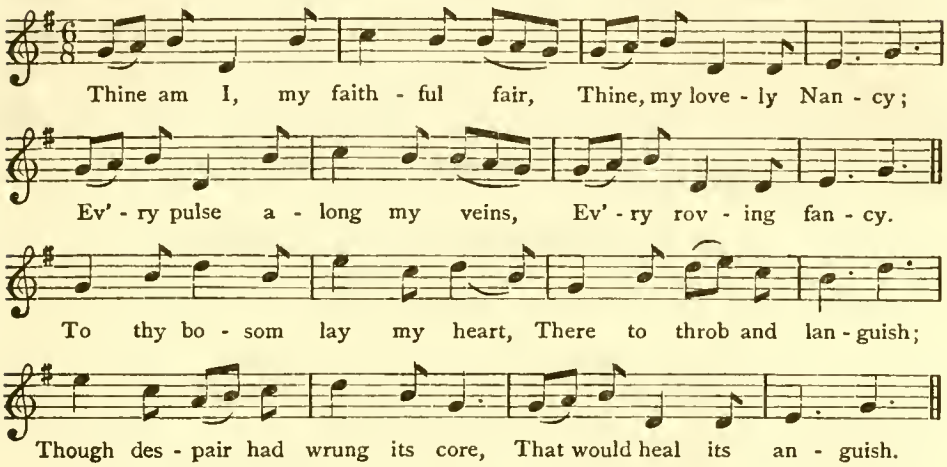
* The tall, characteristic figure and contemplative countenance of this gentleman is familiar to students of "Kay's Edinburgh Characters," in which work a memoir of him is included. He resided with his sister, Lady Colville, at Drumsheugh, near the present Dean Bridge, from 1790 to 1793. Becoming involved in his circumstances, through gambling propensities, he drowned himself in the Forth, opposite Caroline Park, in September, 1793.

"Leiger 'm choss, my bonie wee lass,
Leiger 'm choss, my dearie;
A' the lee-lang winter night,
Leiger 'm choss, my dearie."

The following verses, I hope, will please you, as an English song to the air:—

SONG.

ALLEGRETTO. TUNE—"The Quaker's Wife."



(*See* page 191, Vol. IV.)

Your objection to the English song I proposed for "John Anderson, my jo," is certainly just. The following is by an old acquaintance of mine, and I think has merit. You will see that each fifth line is made to suit the peculiar note you mention. The song was never in print, which, I think, is so much in your favor. The more original good poetry your Collection contains, it certainly has so much the more merit:—

SONG—BY GAVIN TURNBULL.*

Tune—"John Anderson, my Jo."

"O condescend, dear charming maid,
My wretched state to view;

* Gavin Turnbull, poet and comedian, was born in Roxburghshire, and settled early in Kilmarnock, where he may have formed the acquaintance of Burns in 1786. A volume of his poems was printed at Glasgow in 1788. He was one of the players in Sutherland's company at Dumfries, which Burns warmly patronised even before he left Ellisland. Turnbull afterwards went to America, and the remainder of his history is a blank.

A tender swain to love betrayed,
And sad despair, by you:
While here, all *melancholy*,
My passion I deplore,
Yet, urged by some resistless fate,
I love thee more and more," &c.

The following address of Turnbull's to the Nightingale will suit as an English song to the air, "There was a Lass, and she was fair." By the by, Turnbull has a great many songs in MSS. which I can command, if you like his manner. Possibly, as he is an old friend of mine, I may be prejudiced in his favor; but I like some of his pieces very much:—

THE NIGHTINGALE—By G. Turnbull.

Tune—"Bonie Jean."

"Thou sweetest minstrel of the grove,
That ever tried the plaintive strain,
Awake thy tender tale of love
And soothe a poor forsaken swain;
Who, though the Muses deign to aid,
And teach him smoothly to complain;
Yet Delia, charming, cruel maid,
Is deaf to her forsaken swain," &c.

I shall just transcribe another of Turnbull's, which would go charmingly to "Lewie Gordon:"—

LAURA—By G. Turnbull.

Tune—"Lewie Gordon."

"Let me wander where I will—
Shady wood, or winding rill;
Where the sweetest May-born flowers
Paint the meadows, deck the bowers;
Where the linnets' early song
Echoes sweet the woods among;
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still," &c.

The rest of your letter I shall answer at some other opportunity. Yours, R. B.

([15]) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *7th November*, 1793.

MY GOOD SIR,—After so long a silence, it gave me peculiar pleasure to recognise your well-known hand, for I had begun to be apprehensive that all was not well with you. I am happy to find, however, that your silence did not proceed from that cause, and that you have got among the ballads once more.

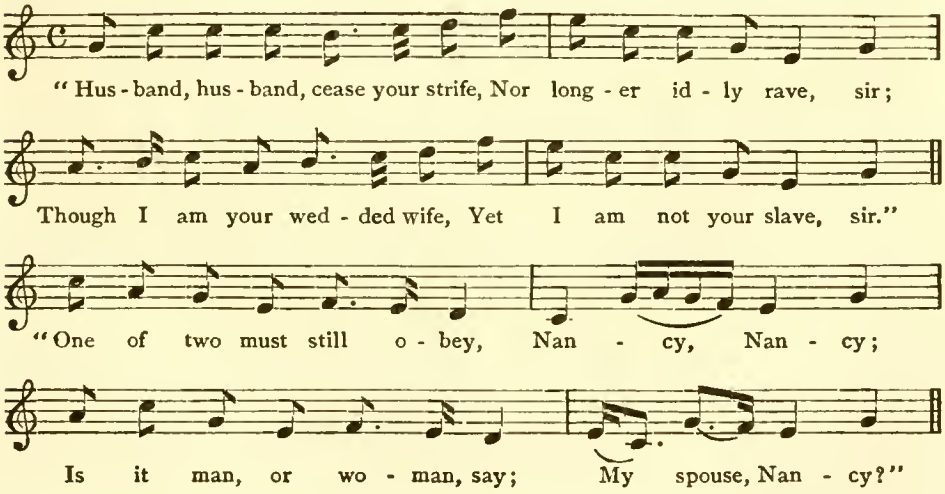
I have to thank you for your English song to "Leiger 'm choss," which I think extremely good, although the coloring is warm. Your friend Mr. Turnbull's songs have doubtless considerable merit; and as you have the command of his manuscripts, I hope you may find out some that will answer as English songs to the airs yet unprovided. G. T.

([32]) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

December, 1793.

TELL me, my dear Sir, if you like the following verses to "My Jo Janet?"

LIVELY. TUNE—"My Jo Janet."



(*See* page 193, Vol. IV.)

Yours, R. B.

(16) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 17*th April*, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,—Owing to the distress of our friend [Cunningham] for the loss of his child, at the time of his receiving your admirable but melancholy letter,* I had not an opportunity, till lately, of perusing it. How sorry I am to find Burns saying, "Canst thou minister to a mind diseased?" while he is delighting others from one end of the island to the other. Like the hypochondriac who went to consult a physician upon his case—"Go," says the doctor, "and see the famous Carlini, who keeps all Paris in good humor." "Alas! Sir," replied the patient, "I am that unhappy Carlini!"

Your plan for our meeting together pleases me greatly,† and I trust that, by some means or other, it will soon take place; but your bacchanalian challenge almost frightens me, for I am a miserably weak drinker!

Allan is much gratified by your good opinion of his talents. He has just begun a sketch from your "Cotter's Saturday Night," and, if it pleases himself in the design, he will probably etch or engrave it. In subjects of the pastoral and humorous kind he is, perhaps, unrivalled by any artist living. He fails a little in giving beauty and grace to his females, and his coloring is sombre, otherwise his paintings and drawings would be in greater request.

I like the music of the "Sutor's Dochter," and will consider whether it shall be added to the last volume. Your verses to it are pretty;‡ but your humorous English song to suit "Jo Janet" is inimitable. What think you of the air "Within a mile of Edinburgh?" It has always struck me as a modern English imitation; but it is said to be Oswald's, and is so much liked, that I believe I must include it.§ The verses are little better than namby-pamby. Do you consider it worth a stanza or two? G. T.

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* See page 392, Vol. IV.

† See page 400, Vol. IV. ‡ See page 398, Vol. IV.

§ There was an old strain to the words "Within a mile of Edinburgh town," but the popular air here referred to is a composition of Hook, father of Mr. Theodore Hook.

(33) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

June, 1794.

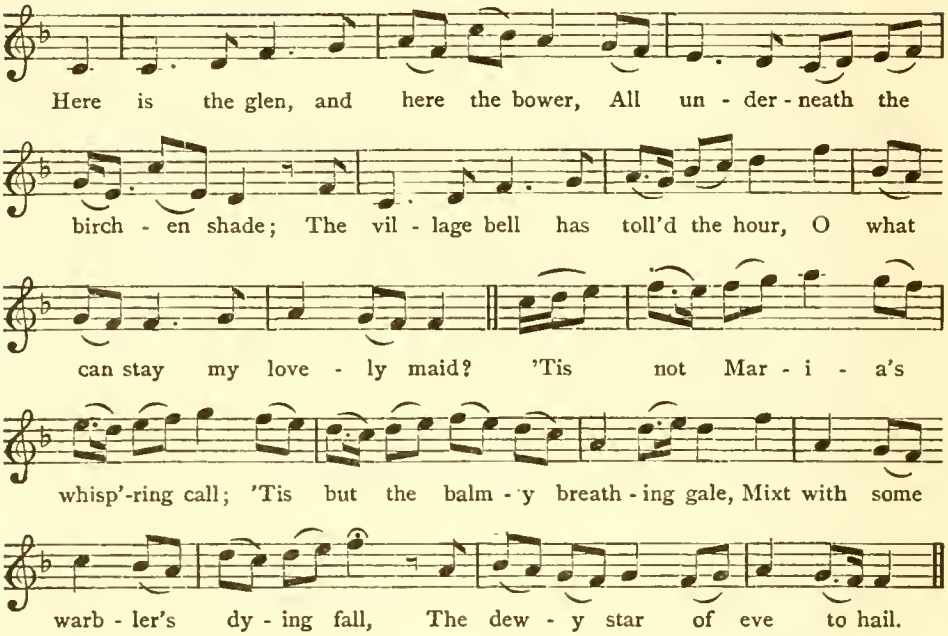
My Dear Sir,—I return you the plates, with which I am highly pleased, your criticism on the grouping of the young lad being introduced to the mother only excepted. There I entirely agree with you. I would humbly propose that instead of the younker knitting, the artist would (in preference to your "trump"), put a stock and horn among his hands, as if he were screwing and adjusting it. I would have returned them sooner, but I waited the opinion of a friend of mine, who is positively the ablest judge on the subject I have ever met with, and though an unknown, is yet a superior artist with the burin, and he is quite charmed with Allan's manner. I got him a peep of the gentle shepherd; and he pronounces Allan a most original artist of great excellence.

For my part, I look on Mr. Allan's choosing my favorite poem for his subject, to be one of the highest compliments I have ever received.

I am quite vexed at Pleyel's being cooped up in France, as it will put an entire stop to our work. Now, and for six or seven months, I shall be quite in song, as you shall see by and by. I know you value a composition, because it is made by one of the great ones, as little as I do. However, I got an air, pretty enough, composed by Lady Elizabeth Heron, of Heron, which she calls "The Banks of Cree." Cree is a beautiful romantic stream, and as her Ladyship is a particular friend of mine, I have written the following song to it:—

SONG.

ANDANTE. TUNE—"The Flowers of Edinburgh."



(*See* page 202, Vol. IV.)

The air, I fear, is not worth your while; else I would send it you. I am hurried; so farewell until next post. My "seal" is all well, except that my holly must be a *bush*, not a *tree*, as in the present shield. I also enclose it, and will send the pebble by the first opportunity.*

Yours, R. B.

(34) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[*July*, 1794.]

Is there no news yet, my dear Sir, of Pleyel? Or is your work to be at a dead stop, until these glorious Crusaders, the Allies, set our modern Orpheus at liberty from the savage thraldom of Democrat dis-

* This refers to the commission contained in the poet's letter to Alexander Cunningham, of 3d March, 1794, to have his shield, with crest and motto, designed and cut on a seal. Cunningham had forwarded (through Thomson) a sketch of the design, and Burns here rectifies it.

cords? Alas the day! and woe is me! That auspicious period, pregnant with the happiness of Millions* —that golden age, spotless with Monarchical innocence and Despotic purity—that Millennium, of which the earliest dawn will enlighten even Republican turbulence, and show the swinish multitude that they are but beasts, and, like beasts, must be led by the nose, and goaded in the backside—those days of sweet chords and concords seem by no means near.

Oh, that mine eyes were fountains of waters, for thy rueful sake, poor Prussia! that as thy ire has deluged the plains of Flanders, so might my grief inundate the regions of Gallovidia. Ye children of success, ye sons of prosperity, ye who never shed the tear of sorrow, or felt a wish unsatisfied, spare your reproaches on the left-handed shifts and shuffling of unhappy Brandenburg! Once was his rectitude straight as the shafts of the Archers of Edina, and stubborn as the granite of Gallovidian hills—the Batavian witnessed his bowels of compassion, and Sarmatia rejoiced in his truth. But alas! The needy man who has known better times can only console himself with a song, thus:—

> When princes and prelates, and hot-headed zealots
> A' Europe had set in a low, a low, &c.
>
> (*See* page 136, Vol. IV.)

So much for nonsense! I have sent you by my much-valued friend, Mr. Syme, of this place, the pebble for my seal. You will please remember that my holly is a bush, not a tree.

I have three or four songs on the way for you; but I have not yet put the last hand to them. Pray are you going to insert "Bannockburn," or "Wilt thou be my dearie," in your Collection? If you are not, let me know, as in that case I will give them to

* Here a large *hiatus* occurs in former editions. Dr. Currie has a foot-note thus:—"A part of this letter has been omitted for obvious political reasons."

Johnson's *Museum.* I told you that our friend Clarke is quite an enthusiast in the idea that the air "Nancy's to the greenwood gane," is capable of sentiment and pathos in a high degree. In this, if I remember right, you did not agree with him. I intend setting my verses which I wrote and sent you for "The last time I came o'er the moor," to this air. I have made an alteration in the beginning of the song, which you will find on the new page.

SONG.

Tune—"Nancy's to the greenwood gane."

"Farewell, thou stream that winding flows
Around Eliza's dwelling!
O mem'ry! spare the cruel throes
Within my bosom swelling," etc.

(*See* page 44, Vol. VI.)

I have presented a copy of your songs to the daughter of a much-valued and much-honored friend of mine, Mr. Graham of Fintry. I wrote on the blank side of the title-page, the following address to the young lady:—

"Here, where the Scottish Muse immortal lives
In sacred strains and tuneful numbers joined,
Accept the gift; though humble he that gives,
Rich is the tribute of the grateful mind," etc.

(*See* page 19, Vol. VI.)

I have also promised the young lady a copy of your Sonatas: will you have the goodness to send a copy directed to Miss Graham of Fintry?

Another friend of mine goes to town in a week or so, when you shall again have another packet of nonsense from—Yours, R. B.

([17]) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 10*th August*, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,—I owe you an apology for having so long delayed to acknowledge the favor of your last. I fear it will be as you say—I shall have no more songs from Pleyel till France and we are friends; but, nevertheless, I am desirous to be prepared with the poetry; and as the season approaches in which your Muse of Coila visits you, I trust, I shall, as formerly, be frequently gratified with the result of your amorous and tender interviews. G. T.

([35]) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

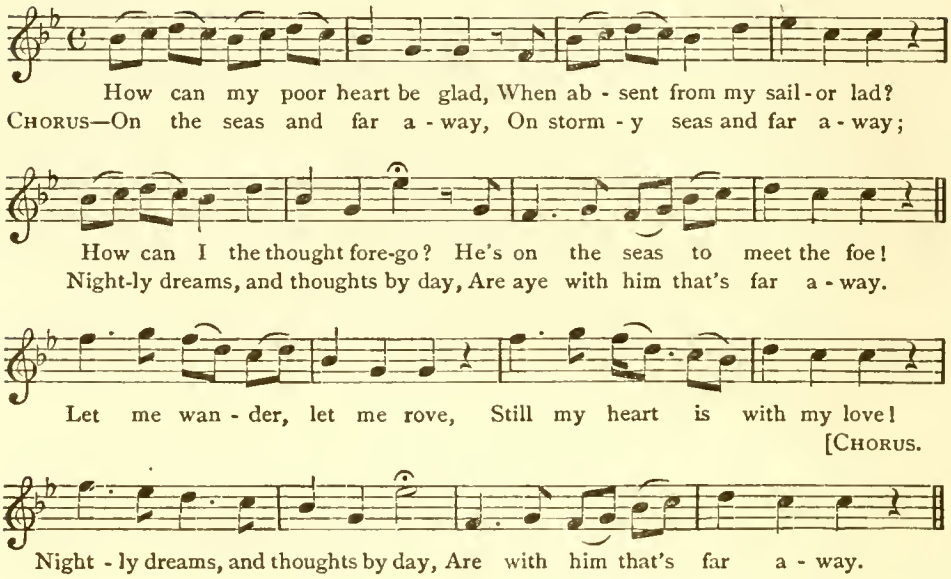
[30*th August*, 1794.]

THE last evening I was straying out and thinking of "O'er the Hills and far away," I spun the following stanzas for it; but whether my spinning will deserve to be laid up in store, like the precious thread of the silkworm, or brushed to the devil, like the vile manufacture of the spider, I leave, my dear Sir, to your usual candid criticism. I was pleased with several lines in it at first, but I own that now it appears rather a flimsy business.

This is just a hasty sketch, until I see whether it be worth a critique. We have many sailor-songs, but, as far as I at present recollect, they are mostly effusions of the jovial sailor, not the wailings of his lovelorn mistress. I must here make one sweet exception —"Sweet Annie frae the sea-beach came." Now for the song:—

ON THE SEAS AND FAR AWAY.

ALLEGRETTO. TUNE—"O'er the Hills and Far Awa'."



(*See* page 20, Vol. VI.)

I give you leave to abuse this song, but do it in the spirit of Christian meekness.

Yours ever, R. B.

(18) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 16 *Sept.* 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,—You have anticipated my opinion of "On the seas and far away." I do not think it one of your very happiest productions, though it certainly contains stanzas that are worthy of all acceptation.

The second is the least to my liking, particularly "Bullets, spare my only joy!" Confound the bullets! It might perhaps be objected to the third verse, "At the starless midnight hour," that it has too much grandeur of imagery, and that greater simplicity of thought would have better suited the character of a sailor's sweetheart. The tune, it must be remembered, is of the brisk, cheerful kind. Upon the whole, therefore, in my humble opinion, the song would be better adapted to the tune, if it consisted only of the first and last verses, with the choruses. G. T.

(36) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

Sept. 1794.

LITTLE do the Trustees for our Manufactures, when they frank my letters to you—little do they consider what kind of manufacture they are encouraging. The manufacture of Nonsense was certainly not in idea when the Act of Parliament was framed, and yet, under my hands and your *cover*, it thrives amazingly. Well, there are more pernicious manufactures, that is certain!

I shall withdraw my "O'er the seas and far away" altogether; it is unequal, and unworthy of the work. Making a poem is like begetting a son: you cannot know whether you have a wise man or a fool, until you produce him to the world and try him.

For that reason I send you the offspring of my brain, abortions and all; and as such, pray look over them, and forgive them and burn them. I am flattered at your adopting "Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes," as it was owing to me that ever it saw the light. About seven years ago, I was well acquainted with a worthy little fellow of a clergyman, a Mr. Clunie, who sang it charmingly; and, at my request, Mr. Clarke took it down from his singing. When I gave it to Johnson, I added some stanzas to the song, and mended others, but still it will not do for *you*.* In a solitary stroll which I took to-day, I tried my hand on a few pastoral lines, following up the idea of the chorus, which I would preserve. Here it is, with all its crudities and imperfections on its head.

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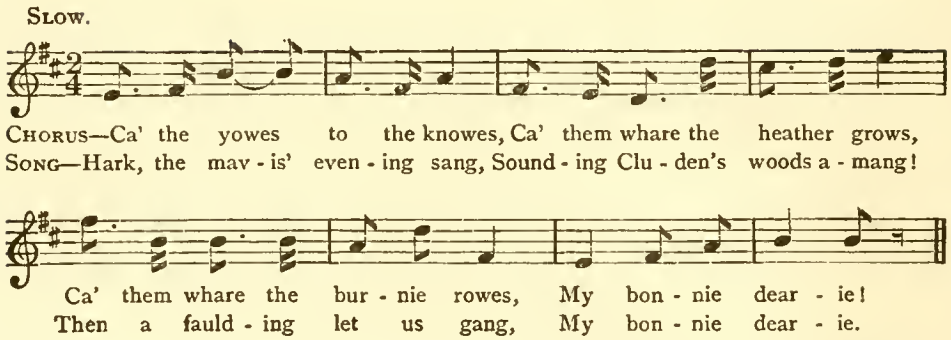
* The song referred to is given at page 101, Vol. III.



(*See* page 20, Vol. VI.)

I will give you my opinion of your other newly adopted songs, my first scribbling fit.

Adieu! R. B.

(37) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[*Sept.* 1794.]

Do you know, my dear Sir, a blackguard Irish song called "Oonagh's Waterfall," or "The lock that scattered Oonagh's p—ss?" Our friend Cunningham sings it delightfully. The air is charming, and I have often regretted the want of decent verses to it. It is too much, at least for *my* humble rustic Muse, to expect that every effort of hers must have merit; still, I think that it is better to have mediocre verses to a favorite air, than none at all. On this principle I have all along proceeded in the *Scots Musical Museum;* and as that publication is at its last volume, I intend the following song to the air I mentioned, for that work.

If it does not suit you as an Editor, you may be pleased to have verses to it, that you may sing it before ladies.

SHE SAYS SHE LO'ES ME BEST OF A'.

ALLEGRETTO. TUNE—"Onagh's Water-fall."

Sae flax - en were her ring - lets, Her eye - brows of a dark - er hue,

Be - witch - ing - ly o'er - arch - ing Twa laugh - ing een o' bon - nie blue.

Her smil - ing sae wyl - ing, Wad make a wretch for - get his woe;

What pleas - ure, what treas - ure, Un - to these ro - sy lips to grow:

Such was my Chlo - ris' bon - nie face, When first her bon - nie face I saw,

And aye my Chlo-ris' dear - est charm, She says she lo'es me best of a'.

(*See* page 23, Vol. VI.)

Not to compare small things with great, my taste in music is like the mighty Frederic of Prussia's taste in painting: we are told that he frequently admired what the Connoisseurs decried, and, always without any hypocrisy, confest his admiration. I am sensible that my taste in music must be inelegant and vulgar, because people of undisputed and cultivated taste can find no merit in many of my favorite tunes. Still, because I am cheaply pleased, is that any reason why I should deny myself that pleasure? Many of our strathspeys, ancient and modern, give me most exquisite enjoyment, where you and other judges would probably be showing signs of disgust. For instance, I am just now making verses to "Rothiemurche's Rant," an air which puts me in raptures; and in fact, unless I be pleased with the tune, I never can make

verses to it. Here I have Clarke on my side, who is a judge that I will pit against any of you. "Rothiemurche," he says, "is an air both original and beautiful;" and, on his recommendation, I have taken the first part of the tune for a chorus, and the fourth or last part for the song. I am but two stanzas deep in the work, and possibly you may think, and justly, that the poetry is as little worth your attention as the music.

SONG.

Tune—"Rothiemurche's Rant."

Chorus—"Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks,
Wilt thou be my Dearie, O?

"Now nature cleeds the flowery lea,
And a' is young and sweet like thee;
O wilt thou share its joys wi' me,
And say thou'lt be my Dearie, O?"

(*See* page 39, Vol. VI.)

I have begun anew "Let me in this ae night."* Do you think that we ought to retain the old chorus? I think we must retain both the old chorus and the first stanza of the old song. I do not altogether like the third line of the first stanza, but cannot alter it to please myself. I am just three stanzas deep in it. How do you like this, and would you have the *denouement* to be successful or otherwise? Should she "let him in," or not?

SONG.

Tune—"Let me in this ae night."

"O lassie, art thou sleepin yet,
Or art thou wauken, I wad wit?
For love has bound me hand an' fit,
And I would fain be in, jo.

* The poet had unsuccessfully tried his hand on this subject in August 1793 (see page 201, *supra*). The present effort is not much better.

"*Chorus*—O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
O let me in this ae night,
I'll no come back again, jo.

"Tho' never durst my tongue reveal,
Lang, lang my heart to thee's been leal;
O lassie dear, ae last fareweel,
For pity's cause alane, jo.
O let me in, &c.

"O wyte na me until thou prove
The fatal force o' mighty love,
Then should on me thy fancy rove,
Count my care by thy ain, jo.
O let me in, &c.

"O pity's ay to woman dear—
She heav'd a sigh, she drapt a tear;
''Twas love for me that brought him here;
Sae how can I complain, jo?'

"*Chorus*—O come your ways this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
O come your ways this ae night,
But ye maunna do't again, jo!"

Did you not once propose "The sow's tail to Geordie" as an air for your work? I am quite delighted with it; but I acknowledge that is no mark of its *real* excellence. I once set about verses for it, which I meant to be in the alternate way of a lover and his mistress chanting together. I have not the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Thomson's Christian name; and yours, I am afraid, is rather burlesque for sentiment, else I had meant to have made you the hero and heroine of the little piece.

I had just written four stanzas at random, which I intend to have woven somewhere into, probably at the conclusion of, the song.

HE.

"The bee that thro' the sunny hour
Sips nectar in the breathing flower,
Compar'd wi' my delight is poor,
Upon the lips o' Jeanie."

SHE.

"The woodbine in the dewy weet,
When e'enin shades in silence meet,
Is nocht sae fragrant and sae sweet
As is a kiss o' Geordie."

HE.

"Let Fortune's wheel at random rin,
And Fools may tyne and Knaves may win;
My thoughts are a' bound up in ane,
And that's my ain dear Jeanie."

SHE.

"What's a' the joys that gowd can gie?
I dinna care a single flie;
The lad I love's the lad for me,
And that's my ain dear Geordie."

(*See* page 65, Vol. VI.)

So much for an idle farago of a gossiping letter. You once asked my air for "Brunswick's great Prince;" it is "Campbells are Comin'."

Do you know a droll Scots song more famous for its humor than delicacy, called "The Grey Goose and the Gled?" Mr. Clarke took down the notes (such as they are) at my request, which I shall give, with some decenter verses, to Johnson. Mr. Clarke says that the tune is positively an old chant of the ROMISH CHURCH, which corroborates the old tradition that at the Reformation, the Reformers burlesqued much of the old Church music with setting them to bawdy verses.

As a further proof, the common name for this song is "Cumnock Psalms." As there can be no harm in

transcribing a stanza of a Psalm, I shall give you two or three; possibly the song is new to you:—

CUMNOCK PSALMS.

"As I looked o'er yon Castle wa'
I spied a grey goose and a gled," &c.

So much for the Psalmody of Cumnock!* How do you like the following epigram which I wrote the other day on a lovely young girl's recovery from a fever? Dr. Maxwell—the identical Maxwell whom Burke mentioned in the House of Commons—was the physician who seemingly saved her from the grave; and to him I address the following:

TO DR. MAXWELL,

ON MISS JESSIE STAIG'S RECOVERY.

Maxwell, if merit here you crave,
That merit I deny;
You save fair Jessie from the grave!
An angel could not die.

God grant you patience with this stupid epistle!—Amen! R. B.

(19) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

[*Oct.* 1794.]

I PERCEIVE the sprightly Muse is now attendant upon her favorite poet whose "woodnotes wild" are becoming as enchanting as ever. "She says she loes me best of a'" is one of the pleasantest table songs I have ever seen, and henceforth shall be mine when the song is going round. I'll give Cunningham a copy; he can more powerfully proclaim its merit. I am far from undervaluing your taste for the Strathspey music; on the contrary, I think it highly animating and

* This is one of the grossest of the songs contained in the collection called "The Merry Muses of Caledonia." The frigid fiddler's hair would stand on end in perusing it! The tune is in the *Museum*, No. 405. See page 3, Vol. VI.

agreeable, and that some of the Strathspeys, when graced with such verses as yours, will make very pleasing songs, in the way that rough Christians are tempered and softened by lovely woman; without whom, you know, they had been brutes.

I am clear for having "The Sow's Tail," particularly as your proposed verses to it are so extremely promising. "Geordie," as you observe, is a name only fit for burlesque composition. Mrs. Thomson's name (Katherine) is not at all poetical. Retain *Jeanie* therefore, and make the other Jamie, or any other that sounds agreeably.

Your "Ca' the ewes," is a precious little morceau. Indeed I am perfectly astonished and charmed with the endless variety of your fancy. Here let me ask you whether you never seriously turned your thoughts to dramatic writing? That is a field worthy of your genius, in which it might shine forth in all its splendor. One or two successful pieces upon the London stage would make your fortune. The rage at present is for musical dramas; few or none of those which have appeared since "The Duenna" possesses much poetical merit: there is little in the conduct of the fable or in the dialogue to interest the audience. They are chiefly vehicles for music and pageantry. I think you might produce a comic opera in three acts, which would live by the poetry, at the same time that it would be proper to take every assistance from her tuneful sister. Part of the songs of course would be to our favorite Scottish airs; the rest might be left to the London composer —*Storace*, for Drury Lane, or *Shield*, for Covent Garden: both of them very able and popular musicians. I believe that interest and manœuvring are often necessary to have a drama brought on; so it may be with the namby-pamby tribe of flowery scribblers; but were you to address Mr. Sheridan himself by letter, and send him a dramatic piece, I am persuaded he would, for the honor of genius, give it a fair and candid trial. Excuse me for obtruding these hints upon your consideration.

G. T.

(20) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 14*th Oct.* 1794.

THE last eight days have been devoted to the re-examination of the Scottish collections. I have read, and sung, and fiddled, and considered, till I am half blind, and wholly stupid. The few airs I have added are enclosed.

Peter Pindar has at length sent me all the songs I expected from him, which are in general elegant and beautiful. Have you heard of a London collection of Scottish airs and songs, just published by Mr. Ritson, an Englishman? I shall send you a copy. His introductory essay on the subject is curious, and evinces great reading and research, but does not decide the question as to the origin of our melodies; though he shows clearly that Mr. Tytler, in his ingenious dissertation, has adduced no sort of proof of the hypothesis he wished to establish; and that his classification of the airs, according to the æras when they were composed, is mere fancy and conjecture. On John Pinkerton, Esq., he has no mercy; but consigns him to damnation! He snarls at my publication on the score of Pindar being engaged to write songs for it; uncandidly and unjustly leaving it to be inferred, that the songs of Scottish writers had been sent a packing to make room for Peter's! Of you he speaks with some respect, and gives you a passing hit or two, for daring to dress up a little some foolish songs for the *Museum*. His sets of the Scottish airs are taken, he says, from the oldest collections and best authorities; many of them, however, have a strange aspect, and are so unlike the sets which are sung by every person of taste, old or young, in town or country, that we can scarcely recognise the features of our favorites. By going to the oldest collections of our music, it does not follow that we find the melodies in their original state. These melodies had been preserved, we know not how long, by oral communication, before being collected and printed; and as different persons sing the same air very differently, according to their accurate or confused recollection of it, so, even supposing the first collectors to have possessed the industry, the taste, and discernment to choose the best they could hear (which is far from certain), still it must evidently be a chance, whether the collections exhibit any of the melodies in the state they were first composed. In selecting the melodies for my own collection, I have been as much guided by the living as by the dead. Where these differed, I preferred the sets that appeared to me the most simple and beautiful, and the most generally approved; and without meaning any compliment to my own capability of choosing, or speaking of the pains I have taken, I flatter myself that my sets will be found equally freed from vulgar errors on the one hand, and affected graces on the other. G. T.

(38) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

My Dear Friend,—By this morning's post I have your list, and, in general, I highly approve of it. I shall, at more leisure, give you a critique on the whole. In the meantime, let me offer at a new improvement, or rather a restoring of old simplicity, in one of your newly adopted songs:—

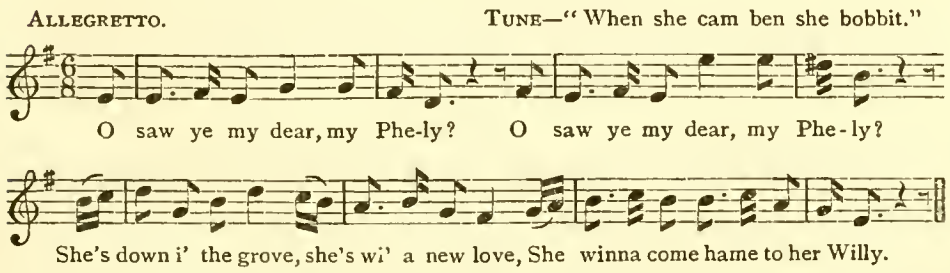
> "When she cam ben she bobbit (a crotchet stop)
> When she cam ben, she bobbit; (do.)
> And when she cam ben, she kiss'd Cockpen,
> And syne denied that she did it" (a crotchet stop).

This is the old rhythm, and by far the most original and beautiful. Let the harmony of the bass at the stops be full, and thin and dropping through the rest of the air, and you will give the tune a noble and striking effect. Perhaps I am betraying my ignorance; but Mr. Clarke is decidedly of my opinion. He goes to your town by to-day's Fly, and I wish you would call on him, and take his opinion in general; you know his taste is a standard. He will return here in a week or two, so please do not miss asking for him. One thing I hope he will do, which would give me high satisfaction—persuade you to adopt my favorite, "Craigieburn Wood," in your selection; it is as great a favorite of his as of mine. The lady on whom it was made is one of the finest women in Scotland; and, in fact (*entre nous*), is, in a manner, to me, what Sterne's Eliza was to him—a Mistress, or Friend, or what you will, in the guileless simplicity of Platonic love. (Now, don't put any of your squinting constructions on this, or have any clishmaclavers about it among our acquaintances.) I assure you that to my lovely Friend you are indebted for many of your best songs of mine. Do you think that the sober gin-

horse routine of existence could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos equal to the genius of your Book? No, no! Whenever I want to be more than ordinary in song—to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs—do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation? *Tout au contraire!* I have a glorious recipe; the very one that for his own use was invented by the Divinity of Healing and Poesy, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself in the regimen of admiring a fine woman; and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion you are delighted with my verses. The lightning of her eye is the godhead of Parnassus, and the witchery of her smile the divinity of Helicon!

To descend to the business with which I began: if you like my idea of "When she cam ben she bobbit," the following stanzas of mine, altered a little from what they were formerly when set to another air [Eppie Macnab, p. 58, Vol. IV.], may perhaps do instead of worse stanzas:—

SONG. (QUASI DICAT, PHILLIS.)



What says she, my dear, my Phely?
What says she, my dear, my Phely?
She lets thee to wit she has thee forgot,
And for ever disowns thee, her Willy.

O had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
As light as the air, as fause as thou'se fair,
Thou's broken the heart o' thy Willy.

Now for a few miscellaneous remarks. "The Posie" is my composition; the air was taken down from Mrs. Burns's voice. It is well known in the west country, but the old words are trash. By the by, take a look at the tune again, and tell me if you do not think it is the original from which "Roslin Castle" is composed. The second part, in particular, for the first two or three bars, is exactly the old air. "Strathallan's Lament" is mine; the music is by our right trusty and deservedly well-beloved Allan Masterton. The "Young Hd. Rover" (Morag) is also mine, but is not worthy of the fine air. "Donocht-head" is not mine; I would give ten pounds it were. It appeared first in the *Edinburgh Herald*, and came to the editor of that paper with the Newcastle post-mark on it. "Whistle o'er the lave o't" is mine; the music said to be by a John Bruce, a celebrated violin-player in Dumfries, about the beginning of this century. This I know, Bruce, who was an honest man, though a red-wud Highlandman, constantly claimed it; and by the old musical people here is believed to be the author of it.

"O how can I be blythe and glad" is mine; but as it is already appropriated to an air by itself, both in the *Museum*, and from thence to Ritson (I have got that book), I think it would be as well to leave it out. However, do as you please.

"M'Pherson's Farewell" is mine, excepting the chorus, and one stanza.

"Andrew and his cutty gun." The song to which it is set in the *Museum* is mine, and was composed on Miss Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, commonly and deservedly called "The Flower of Strathmore."

"The Quaker's Wife." Do not give the tune that name, but the old Highland one, "Leiger 'm chose." The only fragment remaining of the old words is the

chorus, still a favorite lullaby of my old mother, from whom I learned it—

> "Leiger 'm chose, my bonie wee lass,
> And Leiger 'm chose, my dearie;
> A' the lee-lang winter night,
> Leiger 'm chose, my dearie."

The current name for the reel to this day at country weddings is *Leggeram Cosh*, a Lowland corruption of the original Gaelic. I have altered the first stanza, which I would have to stand thus—

> "Thine am I, my faithful Fair,
> Well thou may'st discover;*
> Every pulse along my veins
> Tells the ardent lover."

"Saw ye my father?" I am decidedly of opinion that you should set the tune to the old song, and let mine follow for English verses; but as you please.

"In simmer when the hay was mawn," and "O for ane-and-twenty, Tam," are both mine. The set of the last in the *Museum* does not please me; but if you will get any of our ancienter Scots fiddlers to play you, in strathspey time, "The Moudiewart"—that is the name of the air—I think it will delight you.

"How long and dreary is the night!" I met with some such words in a collection of songs somewhere, which I altered and enlarged; and to please you, and to suit your favorite air of "Cauld Kail," I have taken a stride or two across my room, and have arranged it anew, as you will find on the other page.

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* The alteration here made is no improvement; but the poet had now lost conceit of "Clarinda," the proper heroine of the song; and therefore he erases the once loved name of "Nancy," leaving the heroineship indefinite. By and by we shall see that the name "Chloris" is installed in its place.

SONG.

MODERATE. TUNE—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen."

How lang and drear - y is the night, When I am frae my dear - ie!

I rest - less lie frae e'en to morn, Though I were ne'er sae wear - y.

For oh, her lane - ly nights are lang; And oh, her dreams are eer - ie;

And oh, her wid-ow'd heart is sair, That's ab - sent frae her dear - ie.

(*See* page 31, Vol. VI.)

Tell me how you like this. I differ from your idea of the expression of the tune. There is, to me, a great deal of tenderness in it. You cannot, in my opinion, dispense with a bass to your addenda airs. A lady of my acquaintance, a noted performer, plays "Nae luck about the house," and sings it at the same time so charmingly, that I shall never bear to see any of my songs sent into the world as naked as Mr. What-d'ye-call-im * has done in his London collection.

These English songs gravel me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue. In fact, I think my ideas are more barren in English than in Scottish. I have been at "Duncan Gray," to dress it in English, but all I can do is deplorably stupid †—for instance,

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* Mr. Ritson, in his publication, "Scottish Songs."

† "I cannot agree with the Poet in thinking this a stupid song; and therefore I will publish it.—G. T."

SONG.

LIVELY. TUNE—"Duncan Gray."

Let not woman e'er com - plain Of in - con - stan - cy in love;

Let not woman e'er com - plain, Fickle man is apt to rove:

Look abroad through Nature's range, Nature's mighty law is change;

La - dies, would it not be strange, Man should then a monster prove?

(*See* page 32, Vol. VI.)

If you insert both Peter's song and mine, to the tune of "The Bonnie Brucket Lassie," it will cost you engraving the first verse of both songs, as the rhythm of the two is considerably different. As "Fair Eliza" is already published, I am totally indifferent whether you give it a place or not; but to my taste, the rhythm of my song to that air would have a much more original effect.

"Love never more shall give me pain," has long been appropriated to a popular air of the same title, for which reason, in my opinion, it would be improper to set it to "My Lodging is on the cold ground." There is a song in the *Museum* by a *ci-devant* goddess of mine,* which I think not unworthy of the air, and suits the rhythm equally with "Love never more," &c. It begins—

"Talk not of love, it gives me pain."

---

* Chambers here paused to remark thus:—"It was right, even in these poetico-Platonic affairs, to be off with the old love before he was on with the new. Yet it was only four months before—only in June, that she was 'my ever-dear Clarinda!' And a letter of mere *friendship* was then too cold to be attempted! (See page 140, *supra*.) O womankind, think of that when you are addressed otherwise than in the language of sober common sense!"

Since the above, I have been out in the country taking a dinner with a friend, where I met the lady whom I mentioned in the second page of this odds-and-ends of a letter. As usual, I got into song, and returning home I composed the following—

THE LOVER'S MORNING SALUTE TO HIS MISTRESS.

ANDANTE. TUNE—"Deil tak' the Wars."

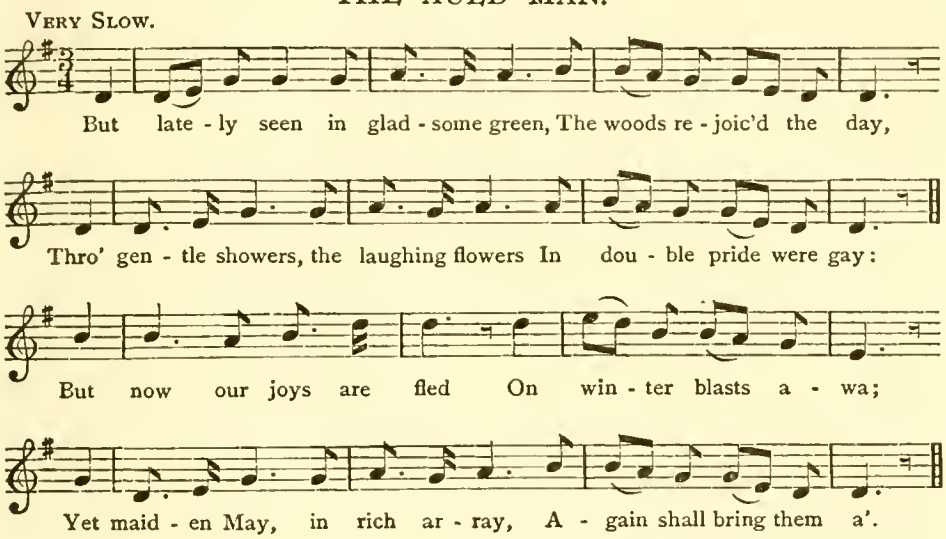
Sleep'st thou, or wak'st thou, fair - est crea - ture? Ro - sy morn now lifts his eye, Numbering ilk - a bud which Na - ture Wa - ters wi' the tears o' joy. Now, to the streaming fountain, Or up the heathy mountain, The hart, hind, and roe, freely, wildly wan - ton stray; In twin - ing haz - el bow'rs, His lay the lin - net pours; The lav'rock to the sky A-scends, wi' sangs o' joy, While the sun and thou a-rise to bless the day.

(*See* page 33, Vol. VI.)

I allow the first four lines of each stanza to be repeated; but if you inspect the air, in that part, you will find that it also, with a quaver of difference, is the same passages repeated; which will exactly put it on the footing of other slow Scots airs, as they, you know, are twice sung over. If you honor my serenade by setting the air to it, I will vamp up the old song, and make it English enough to be understood. I have sent you my song noted down to the air, in the way I think that it should go; I believe you will find my set of the air to be one of the best.

I enclose you a musical curiosity—an East Indian air, which you would swear was a Scots one. I know the authenticity of it, as the gentleman who brought it over is a particular acquaintance of mine. Do preserve me the copy I send you, as it is the only one I have. Clarke has set a bass to it, and I intend putting it into the *Musical Museum.* Here follow the verses I intend for it :—

THE AULD MAN.



(*See* page 35, Vol. VI.)

I would be obliged to you if you would procure me a sight of Ritson's collection of English songs which you mention in your letter. I can return them three times a week by the Fly. The Scottish collection, as I told you, I have got. I will thank you for another information, and that as speedily as you please —whether this miserable, drawling, hotch-potch epistle has not completely tired you of the correspondence of yours, R. Burns.

19*th Oct.* 1794.

([21]) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *27th October*, 1794.

I AM sensible, my dear friend, that a genuine poet can no more exist without his mistress than his meat. I wish I knew the adorable she whose bright eyes and witching smiles have so often enraptured the Scottish bard, that I might drink her sweet health when the toast is going round. "Craigieburn Wood" must certainly be adopted into my family, since she is the subject of the song; but in the name of decency, I must beg a new chorus-verse from you. "O to be lying beyond thee, dearie," is perhaps a consummation to be wished, but will not do for singing in the company of ladies. The songs in your last will do you lasting credit, and suit the respective airs charmingly. I am perfectly of your opinion with respect to the additional airs. The idea of sending them into the world naked as they were born was ungenerous. They must all be clothed and made decent by our friend Clarke.

I find I am anticipated by the friendly Cunningham in sending you Ritson's Scottish collection. Permit me, therefore, to present you with his English collection, which you will receive by the coach. I do not find his historical essay on Scottish song interesting. Your anecdotes and miscellaneous remarks will, I am sure, be much more so. Allan has just sketched a charming design from "Maggie Lauder." She is dancing with such spirit as to electrify the piper, who seems almost dancing too, while he is playing with the most exquisite glee. I am much inclined to get a small copy, and to have it engraved in the style of Ritson's prints.

P.S.—What do your anecdotes say concerning "Maggie Lauder?" Was she a real personage, and of what rank? You would surely speer for her, if you ca'd at Anster town.

G. T.

([39]) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[*Nov.* 1794.]

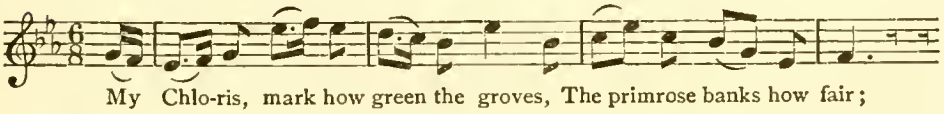
MANY thanks, my dear Sir, for your present; it is a book of the utmost importance to me. I have yesterday begun my anecdotes, &c., for your work. I

intend drawing them up in the form of a letter to you, which will save me from the tedious, dull business of systematic arrangement.* Indeed, as all I have to say consists of unconnected remarks, anecdotes, scraps of old songs, &c., it will be impossible to give the work a beginning, a middle and an end, which the critics insist to be absolutely necessary in a work. As soon as I have a few pages in order, I will send you them as a specimen. I only fear that the matter will grow so large among my hands as to be more expense than you can allot for it. Now for my desultory way of writing you.

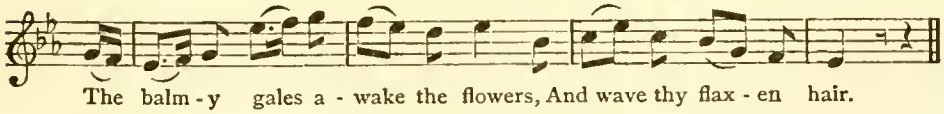
I am happy that I have at last pleased you with verses to your right-hand tune "Cauld Kail." I see a little unpliancy in the line you object to, but cannot alter it for a better. It is one thing to know one's error, and another and much more difficult affair to amend that error. In my last, I told you my objections to the song you had selected for "My lodging is on the cold ground." On my visit the other day to my fair Chloris (that is the poetic name of the lovely goddess of my inspiration), she suggested an idea, which I, on my return from the visit, wrought into the following song. It is exactly in the measure of "My dearie, an thou die," which you say is the precise rhythm of the air :—

SONG.

TUNE—"Away to bonnie Tweedside."

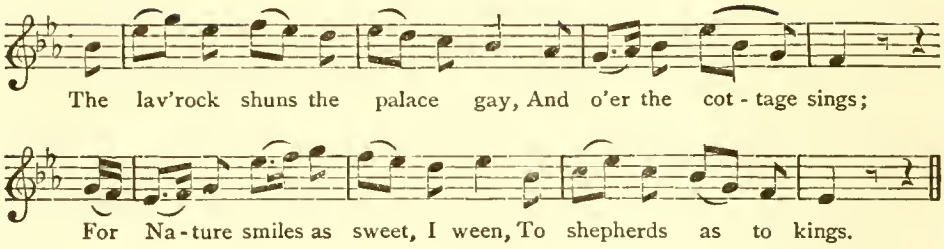


My Chlo-ris, mark how green the groves, The primrose banks how fair;



The balm-y gales a-wake the flowers, And wave thy flax-en hair.

* The paper here referred to seems not to have been completed; and the portion forwarded to Thomson by way of specimen has not been found.



(*See* page 36, Vol. VI.)

How do you like the simplicity and tenderness of this pastoral? I think it pretty well.

I like you for entering so candidly and so kindly into the story of "ma chère amie." I assure you I was never more in earnest in my life, than in the account of that affair which I sent you in my last. Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel and highly venerate; but somehow, it does not make such a figure in poesy as that other species of the passion,

"Where love is liberty, and nature law."

Musically speaking, the first is an instrument of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet, while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulation of the human soul. Still, I am a very poet in my enthusiasm of the passion. The welfare and happiness of the beloved object is the *first* and *inviolate* sentiment that pervades my soul; and what pleasures I might wish for, or whatever might be the raptures they would give, yet, if they interfere and clash with that first principle, it is having these pleasures at a dishonest price; and Justice forbids, and Generosity disdains the purchase! As to the herd of the sex who are good for little or nothing else, I have made no such agreement with myself; but where the Parties are capable of, and the Passion is, the true Divinity of Love—the man who can act otherwise is a Villain!

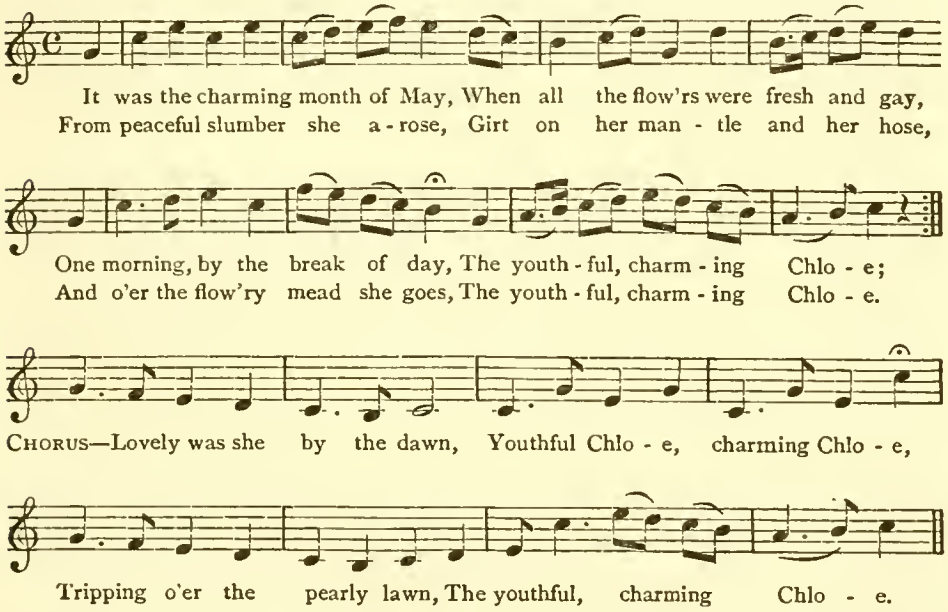
It was impossible, you know, to take up the subject

of your songs in the last sheet: that would have been a falling off indeed!

Despairing of my own powers to give you variety enough in English songs, I have been turning over old collections, to pick out songs of which the measure is something similar to what I want; and with a little alteration, so as to suit the rhythm of the air exactly, to give you them for your work. Where the songs have hitherto been but little noticed, nor have ever been set to music, I think the shift a fair one. A song which, under the same first verse of the first stanza, you will find in Ramsay's *Tea-table Miscellany*, and elsewhere, I have cut down for an English dress to your "Dainty Davy," as follows:

SONG, ALTERED FROM AN OLD ENGLISH ONE.

LIVELY. TUNE—"Dainty Davie."

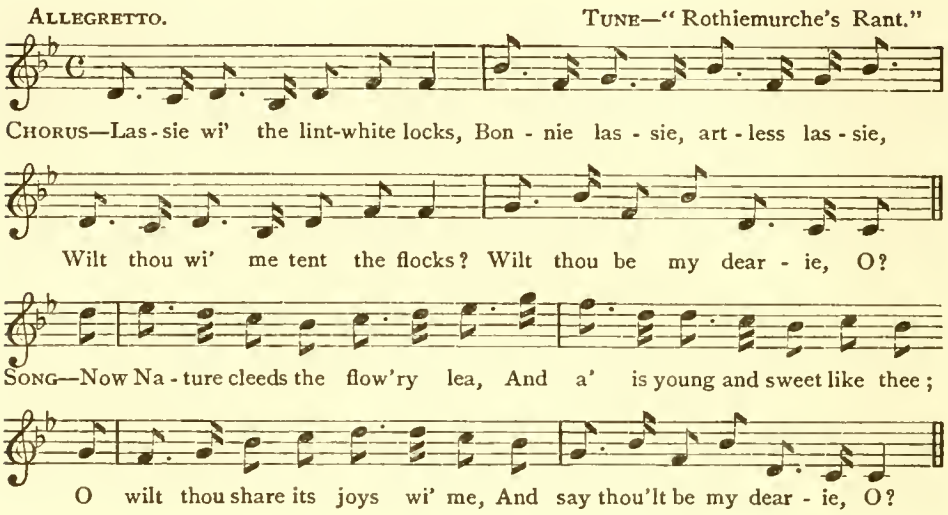


(*See* page 38, Vol. VI.)

You may think meanly of this, but take a look at the bombast original, and you will be surprised that I have made so much of it.

I have finished my song to "Rothiemurche's Rant,"

and you have Clarke to consult as to the set of the air for singing.*



(*See* page 39, Vol. VI.)

This piece has at least the merit of being a regular pastoral; the vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night, are regularly rounded. If you like it, well; if not, I will insert it in the *Museum.*

I am out of temper that you should set so sweet, so tender an air, as "Deil tak the Wars," to the foolish old verses. You talk of the silliness of "Saw ye my Father?" By heavens! the odds is gold to brass. Besides, the old song, though pretty well modernized into the Scottish language, is originally, and in the early editions, a bungling low imitation of the Scots manner, by that genius, Tom D'Urfey, so has no pretensions to be a Scottish production. There is a pretty English song by Sheridan in "The Duenna" to this air, which is out of sight superior to D'Urfey's. It begins—

"When sable night each drooping plant restoring."

The air, if I understand the expression of it properly,

* See page 250, *supra.*

is the very native language of Simplicity, Tenderness, and Love. I have again gone over my song to the tune, as follows—

SONG.

Tune—"Deil tak the wars."

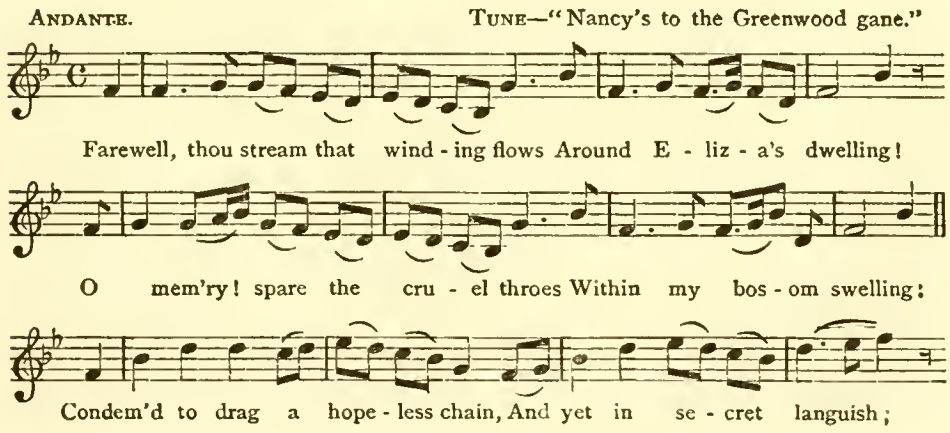
"Sleep'st thou, or wak'st thou, fairest creature?"

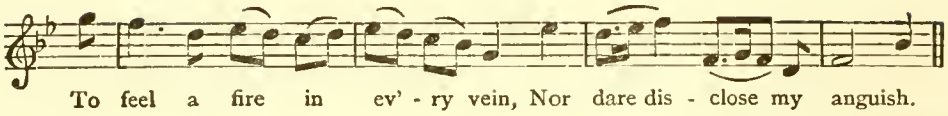
(*See* page 33, Vol. VI.)

I could easily throw this into an English mould; but to my taste, in the simple and tender of the Pastoral song, a sprinkling of the old Scottish has an inimitable effect. You know I never encroach on your privileges as an editor. You may reject my song altogether, and keep by the old one; or you may give mine as a second Scots one; or lastly, you may set the air to my verses, still giving the old song as a second one, and as being well known; in which last case, I would find you, in English verses of my own, a song, the exact rhythm of my Scottish one. If you keep by the old words, Sheridan's song will do for an English one. I once more conjure you to have no manner of false delicacy in accepting or refusing my compositions, either in this or any other of your songs.

Now for my English song to "Nansie's to the Greenwood gane."

SONG.





(*See* page 44, Vol. VI.)

"Young Jockey was the blythest lad." My English song, "Here is the glen, and here the bower," cannot go to this air. However, the measure is so common, that you may have your choice of five hundred English songs. Do you know the air "Lumps o' Pudding?" It is a favorite of mine, and I think would be worth a place among your additional songs, as soon as several in your list. It is in a measure in which you will find songs enow to choose on; but if you were to adopt it, I would take it in my own hand.

There is an air—"The Caledonian Hunt's Delight," to which I wrote a song that you will find in *Johnson*, "Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon;" this air, I think, might find a place among your hundred, as Lear says of his knights. To make room for it you may take out (to my taste) either "Young Jockey was the blythest lad," or "There's nae luck about the house," or "The Collier's bonie lassie," or "The Tither Morn," or "The Sow's Tail;" and put it into your additional list. Not but that these songs have great merit; but still they have not the pathos of "The Banks o' Doon." Do you know the history of the air? It is curious enough. A good many years ago, Mr. James Miller, writer in your good town, a gentleman whom you possibly know, was in company with our friend Clarke, and talking of Scots music, Miller expressed an ardent ambition to be able to compose a Scots air. Mr. Clarke, partly by way of joke, told him to keep to the black keys of the harpsichord, and preserve some kind of rhythm, and he would infallibly compose a Scots air. Certain it is that in a few days, Mr. Miller produced the rudiments of an air, which Mr. Clarke, with a few touches and

corrections, fashioned into the tune in question. Ritson, you know, has the same story of the black keys; but this account which I have just given you, Mr. Clarke informed me of several years ago. Now to show you how difficult it is to trace the origin of our airs, I have heard it repeatedly asserted that it was an Irish air; nay, I met with an Irish gentleman who affirmed he had heard it in Ireland among the old women; while, on the other hand, a lady of fashion, no less than a countess, informed me that the first person who introduced the air into this country was a baronet's lady of her acquaintance, who took down the notes from an itinerant piper in the Isle of Man. How difficult, then, to ascertain the truth respecting our poesy and music! I myself have lately seen a couple of ballads sung through the streets of Dumfries, with my name at the head of them as the author, though it was the first time ever I had seen them.

I thank you for admitting "Craigieburn Wood," and I shall take care to furnish it with a new chorus. In fact the chorus *was* not my work, but part of some old verses to the air. If I can catch myself in a more than ordinary propitious moment, I shall write a new "Craigieburn" altogether. My heart is much in the theme.

I am ashamed, my dear fellow, to make the request —'tis dunning your generosity; but in a moment when I had forgot whether I was rich or poor, I promised Chloris a copy of your songs. It wrings my honest pride to write you this; but an ungracious request is doubly so by a tedious apology. To make amends, as soon as I have extracted the necessary information out of them, I will return you Ritson's volumes.

The lady is not a little proud that she is to make so distinguished a figure in your collection, and I am

not a little proud that I have it in my power to please her so much. On second thoughts, I send you Clarke's singing set of Rothiemurche, which please return me in your first letter: I know it will not suit you.

I have no more post-paper, and it is too late to go to the shop, so you must e'en take an envelope of Excise-paper. Lucky it is for your patience that my paper is done, for when I am in a scribbling humor, I know not when to give over. Adieu!

R. BURNS.

(22) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 15*th Nov.* 1794.

MY GOOD SIR,—Since receiving your last, I have had another interview with Mr. Clarke, and a long consultation. He thinks the "Caledonian Hunt" is more bacchanalian than amorous in its nature, and recommends it to you to match the air accordingly. Pray, did it ever occur to you how peculiarly well the Scottish airs are adapted for verses in the form of a dialogue? The first part of the air is generally low, and suited to a man's voice; and the second part, in many instances, cannot be sung at concert-pitch but by a female voice. A song thus performed makes an agreeable variety, but few of ours are written in this form: I wish you would think of it in some of those that remain. The only one of the kind you have sent is admirable, and will be a universal favorite.

Your verses for "Rothiemurche" are so sweetly pastoral, and your serenade to Chloris, for "Deil tak the wars," so passionately tender, that I have sung myself into raptures with them. Your song for "My Lodging is on the cold ground," is likewise a diamond of the first water; I am quite dazzled and delighted by it. Some of your Chlorises, I suppose, have flaxen hair, from your partiality for this color—else we differ about it; for I could scarcely conceive a woman to be a beauty, on reading that she had lint-white locks.

"Farewell, thou Stream that winding flows," I think excellent, but it is much too serious to come after "Nancy"—at least, it would seem an incongruity to provide the same air with merry Scottish and melancholy English verses! The

more that the two sets of verses resemble each other in their general character, the better. Those you have manufactured for "Dainty Davie" will answer charmingly. I am happy to find you have begun your anecdotes: I care not how long they be, for it is impossible that any thing from your pen can be tedious. Let me beseech you not to use ceremony in telling me when you wish to present any of your friends with the songs; the next carrier will bring you three copies, and you are as welcome to twenty as to a pinch of snuff. G. T.

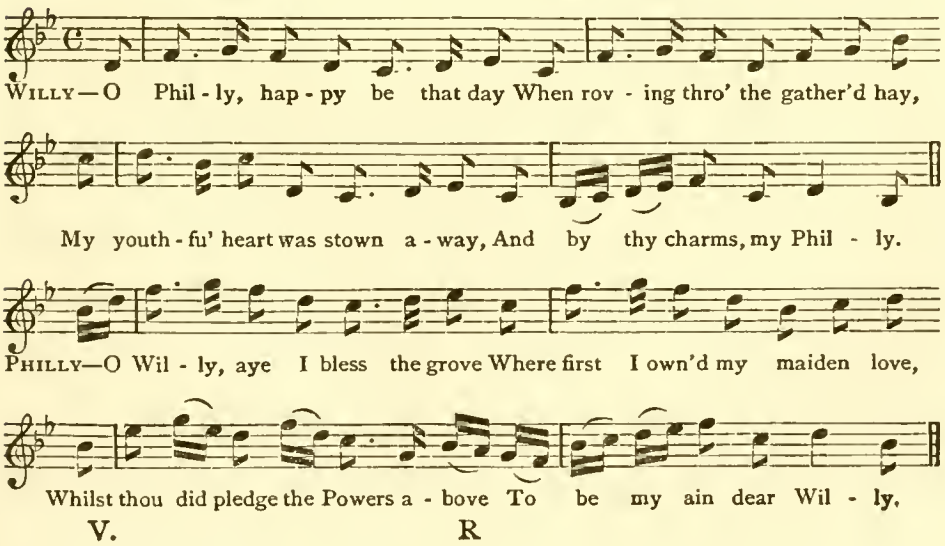
(40) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[19*th November* 1794.]

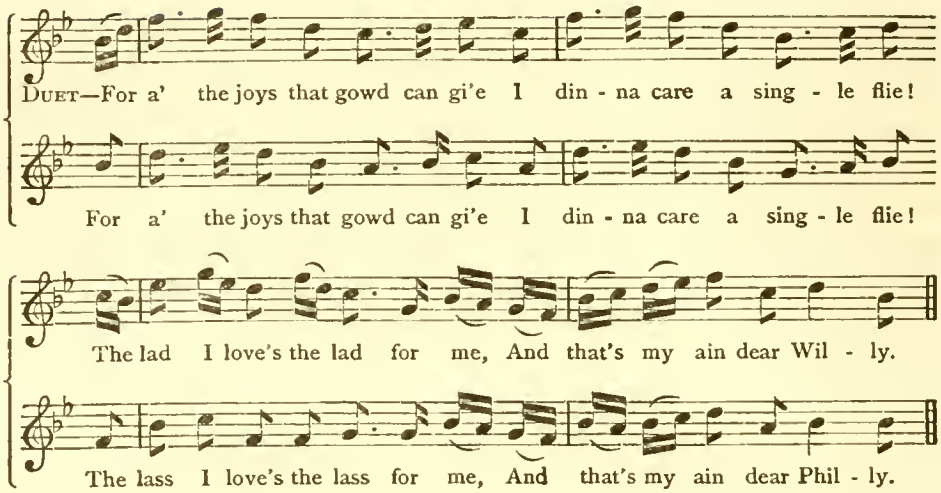
You see, my dear Sir, what a punctual correspondent I am; though indeed you may thank yourself for the tedium of my letters, as you have so flattered me on my horsemanship with my favorite hobby, and have praised the grace of his ambling so much, that I am scarcely off his back. For instance, this morning, though a keen blowing frost, in my walk before breakfast I finished my Duet, which you were pleased to praise so much. Whether I have uniformly succeeded, I will not say; but here it is to you, though it is not an hour old—

SONG.

Tune—"The Sow's Tail to Geordie."



V. R



(*See* page 41, Vol. VI.)

Tell me honestly how you like it, and point out whatever you think faulty.

I am much pleased with your idea of singing our songs in alternate stanzas, and regret that you did not hint it to me sooner. In those that remain, I shall have it in my eye. I remember your objections to the name Philly, but it is the common abbreviation of Phillis. Sally, the only other name that suits, has, to my ear, a vulgarity about it which unfits it for any thing except burlesque. The legion of Scottish poetasters of the day, whom your brother-editor, Mr. Ritson, ranks with me as my coevals, have always mistaken vulgarity for simplicity; whereas simplicity is as much èloignèe from vulgarity on the one hand, as from affected point and puerile conceit on the other.

I agree with you as to the air "Craigieburn Wood," that a chorus would in some degree spoil the effect, and shall certainly have none in my projected song to it. It is not, however, a case in point with "Rothemurche;" there, as in "Roy's Wife of Aldivaloch," a chorus, to my taste, goes well enough. As to the chorus going first, you know it is so with "Roy's Wife," as also with "Rothemurche." In fact, in the first part of both tunes, the rhythm is so peculiar and

irregular, and on that irregularity depends so much of their beauty, that we must e'en take them with all their wildness, and humor the verse accordingly. Leaving out the starting-note in both tunes has, I think, an effect that no regularity could counterbalance the want of—

"O Roy's wife of Aldivaloch," &c.
"O lassie wi' the lint-white locks," &c.

(Compare with)

"Roy's wife of Aldivaloch," &c.
"Lassie wi' the lint-white locks," &c.

Does not the tameness of the prefixed syllable strike you? In the last case, with the true fervor of genius, you strike at once into the wild originality of the air; whereas, in the first insipid business, it is like the grating screw of the pins before the fiddle is brought in tune. This is my taste; if I am wrong, I beg pardon of the *cognoscenti.*

I am also of your mind as to the "Caledonian Hunt;" but to fit it with verses to suit these dotted crotchets will be a task indeed. I differ from you as to the expression of the air. It is so charming, that it would make any subject in a song go down; but pathos is certainly its native tongue. Scots bacchanalians we certainly want, though the few that we have are excellent. For instance, "Todlin Hame" is, for wit and humor, an unparalleled composition; and "Andrew and his cutty gun" is the work of a master. By the way, are you not quite vexed to think that those men of genius, for such they certainly were, who composed our fine Scottish lyrics should be unknown? It has given me many a heartache. Apropos to bacchanalian songs in Scottish, I composed one yesterday, for an air I liked much—"Lumps o' Pudding."

SONG.

WITH SPIRIT. TUNE—"Lumps o' Pudding."

Con - tent - ed wi' lit - tle, and can - tie wi' mair, Whene'er I for-gath-er wi'
sor - row and care, I gi'e them a skelp, as they're creepin' alang, Wi' a cog o'
guid swats, and an auld Scottish sang. I whyles claw the elbow o' troublesome
thought; But man is a sod - ger, and life is a faught; My mirth and guid humor
are coin in my pouch, And my freedom's my lairdship nae monarch dare touch.

(*See* page 43, Vol. VI.)

If you do not relish the air, I will send it to Johnson.

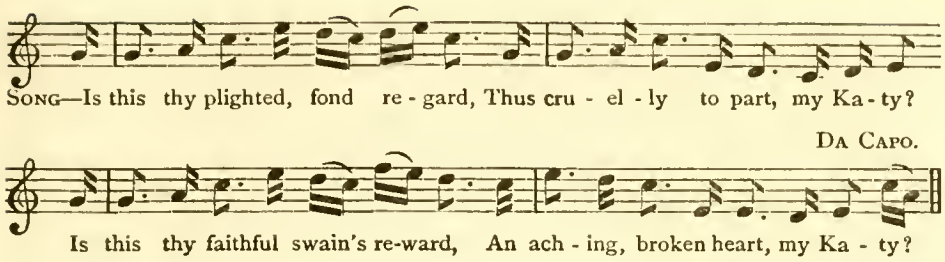
The two songs you saw in Clarke's are neither of them worth your attention. The words of "Auld Lang Syne" are good, but the music is an old air, the rudiments of the modern tune of that name. The other tune you may hear as a common Scots country dance.

20th Nov.—Since yesterday's penmanship I have framed a couple of English stanzas, by way of an English song to "Roy's Wife." You will allow me that in this instance my English corresponds in sentiment with the Scottish.

SONG.

PATHETIC. TUNE—"Roy's Wife."

CHORUS—Canst thou leave me thus, my Ka-ty? Canst thou leave me thus, my Ka - ty?
Well thou know'st my ach - ing heart, And canst thou leave me thus for pi - ty?



(*See* page 45, Vol. VI.)

Well! I think this, to be done in two or three turns across my room, and with two or three pinches of Irish blackguard, is not far amiss. You see I am determined to have my quantum of applause from somebody.

Now for "When she cam ben she bobbit."

SONG.

Tune—"When she cam ben she bobbit."

Oh saw ye my dear, my Mary?
Oh saw ye my dear, my Mary?
She's down i' the grove, she's wi' a new Love,
She winna come hame to her Harry, &c.

(*See* page 31, Vol. VI.)

I think these names will answer better than the former, and the rhythm of the song is as you desired.

I dislike your proposed alterations in two instances. "Logie o' Buchan," and "There's my thumb, I'll ne'er beguile thee," are certainly fittest for your additional songs; and in their place, as two of the hundred, I would put the most beautiful airs—"Whistle and I'll come t' ye, my lad," at all rates, as one. It is surely highly capable of feeling and sentiment, and the song is one of my best. For the other, keep your favorite "Muirland Willie," and with it close your hundred. As for the first being Irish, all that you can say is, that it has a twang of the Irish manner; but to infer from that, that it must of course be an Irish production, is unfair. In the neighborhood and

intercourse of the Scots and Irish—and both musical nations too—it is highly probable that composers of one nation would sometimes imitate and emulate the manner of the other. I never met with an Irishman who claimed this air, a pretty strong proof that it is Scottish. Just the same is the case with "Gramachree:" if it be really Irish, it is decidedly in the Scottish taste. The other one in your collection, "Oran Gaoil," which you think is Irish, they claim as theirs by the name of "Caun du delish;" but look into your publications of Scottish songs, and you will find it as a Gaelic song, with the words in that language, a wretched translation of which original words is set to the tune in the *Museum*. Your worthy Gaelic priest gave me that translation, and at his table I heard both the original and the translation sung by a large party of Highland gentlemen, all of whom had no other idea of the air than that it was a native of their own country.

I am obliged to you for your goodness in your three copies, but will certainly return you two of them. Why should I take money out of your pocket?

Tell my friend Allan (for I am sure that we only want the trifling circumstance of being known to one another to be the best friends on earth) that I much suspect he has in his plates mistaken the figure of the stock and horn. I have at last gotten one, but it is a very rude instrument. It is composed of three parts: the stock, which is the hinder thigh bone of a sheep, such as you see in a mutton ham; the horn, which is a common Highland cow's horn, cut off at the smaller end until the aperture be large enough to admit the stock to be pushed up through the horn until it be held by the thicker end of the thigh bone; and lastly, an oaten reed, exactly cut and notched like that which you see every shepherd boy have when the corn stems are green and full grown. The reed is not

made fast in the bone, but is held by the lips, and plays loose in the smaller end of the stock, while the stock and horn hanging on its larger end is held by the hands in playing. The stock has six or seven ventiges on the upper side, and one back ventige, like the common flute. This of mine was made by a man from the braes of Athole, and is exactly what the shepherds wont to use in that country.

However, either it is not quite properly bored in the holes, or else we have not the art of blowing it rightly, for we can make little of it. If Mr. Allan chooses I will send him a sight of mine, as I look on myself to be a kind of brother brush with him. "Pride in poets is nae sin;" and I will say it that I look on Mr. Allan and Mr. Burns to be the only genuine and real painters of Scottish costume in the world. Farewell! R. BURNS.

(23) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 28*th Nov.* 1794.

I ACKNOWLEDGE, my dear Sir, you are not only the most punctual, but the most delectable correspondent I ever met with. To attempt flattering you never entered into my head; the truth is, I look back with surprise at my imprudence, in so frequently nibbling at lines and couplets of your incomparable lyrics, for which, perhaps, if you had served me right, you would have sent me to the devil. On the contrary, however, you have all along condescended to invite my criticism with so much courtesy, that it ceases to be wonderful if I have sometimes given myself the airs of a reviewer. Your last budget demands unqualified praise: all the songs are charming, but the Duet is a *chef-d'œuvre.* "Lumps o' pudding" shall certainly make one of my family-dishes; you have cooked it so capitally that it will please all palates. Do give us a few more of this cast when you find yourself in good spirits; these convivial songs are more wanted than those of the amorous kind; of which we have great choice, besides one does not often meet with a singer capable of giving the proper effect to

the latter, while the former are easily sung, and acceptable to everybody. I participate in your regret that the authors of some of our best songs are unknown: it is provoking to every admirer of genius.

I mean to have a picture painted from your beautiful ballad, "The Soldier's Return," to be engraved for one of my frontispieces. The most interesting point of time appears to me when she first recognises her "ain dear Willy,"

"She gazed, she redden'd like a rose:"

the three lines immediately following are no doubt more impressive on the reader's feelings; but were the painter to fix on these, then you'll observe the animation and anxiety of her countenance is gone, and he could only represent her fainting in the soldier's arms. But I submit the matter to you, and beg your opinion.

Allan desires me to thank you for your accurate description of the stock and horn, and for the very gratifying compliments you pay him, in considering him worthy of standing in a niche by the side of Burns in the Scottish Pantheon. He has seen the rude instrument you describe, so does not want you to send it; but wishes to know whether you believe it to have ever been generally used as a musical pipe by the Scottish Shepherds, and when, and in what part of the country chiefly. I doubt much if it was capable of anything but routing and roaring. A friend of mine says he remembers to have heard one in his younger days, made of wood instead of your bone, and that the sound was abominable.

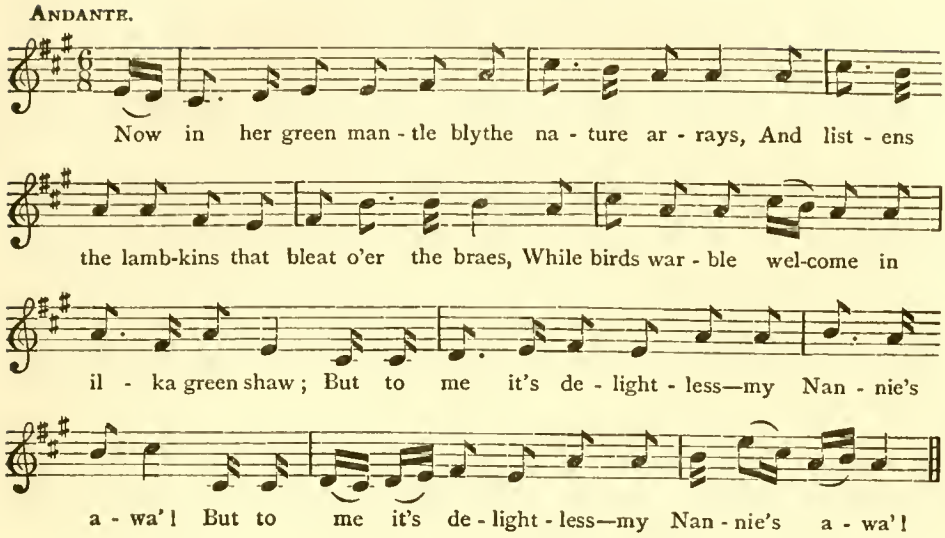
Do not, I beseech you, return the books. G. T.

([41]) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

December 9th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,—It is, I assure you, the pride of my heart to do anything to forward, or add to the value of your books; and as I agree with you that the Jacobite song in the *Museum* to "There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame," would not so well consort with Peter Pindar's excellent love song to that air, I have just framed for you the following:

MY NANIE'S AWA'.



(*See* page 46, Vol. VI.)

How does this please you? I have thought that a song in Ramsay's collection beginning "Come fill me a bumper, my jolly brave boys," might do as an English song for "Todlin' hame." It might do thus:—

"Come fill me a bumper, my jolly brave boys,
Let's have no more of female impert'nence and noise;
I've tried the endearments and witchcraft of love,
And found them but nonsense and whimsies, by Jove!

Chorus—Truce with your love! no more of your love!
The bottle henceforth is my mistress, by Jove!"

As to the point of time for the expression, in your proposed print from my "Soger's Return," it must certainly be at "She gazed." The interesting dubiety and suspense taking possession of her countenance, and the gushing fondness, with a mixture of playfulness in her, strike me as a subject of which a master will make a great deal. In great haste, but in great truth,—Yours, R. B.

(42) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

January 1795.

My Dear Sir,—I fear for my songs, however a few may please; yet originality is a coy feature in composition, and, in a multiplicity of efforts in the same style, disappears altogether. For these three thousand years, we poetic folks have been describing the Spring, for instance, and as the Spring continues the same, there must soon be a sameness in the imagery, &c., of these said rhyming folks. To wander a little from my first design, which was to give you a new song, just hot from the mint, give me leave to squeeze in a clever anecdote of my *Spring* originality:—

Some years ago, when I was young, and by no means the saint I am now, I was looking over, in company with a *belle-lettre* friend, a magazine "Ode to Spring," when my friend fell foul of the recurrence of the same thoughts, and offered me a bet that it was impossible to produce an ode to Spring on an original plan. I accepted it, and pledged myself to bring in the verdant fields, the budding flowers, the crystal streams, the melody of the groves, and a love story into the bargain, and yet be original. Here follows the piece, and wrote to music too!

ODE TO SPRING.

Tune—"The tither morn," &c.

"When mauken bucks," &c.

(*See* page 56, Vol. IV.)

A great critic (Aikin) on song says, that Love and Wine are the exclusive themes for song-writing. The following is on neither subject, and consequently is no song; but will be allowed, I think, to be two or three pretty good prose thoughts inverted into rhyme:

SONG.

SLOW. TUNE—"For a' that, an' a' that."

Is there, for honest po - ver - ty, That hangs his head, and a' that;

The coward slave, we pass him by, We dare be poor for a' that.

CHORUS—For a' that, and a' that, Our toils obscure, and a' that,

The rank is but the guinea's stamp, The man's the gowd for a' that.

(*See* page 50, Vol. VI.)

Jan. 15*th.*—The foregoing has lain by me this fortnight, for want of a spare moment. The Supervisor of Excise here being ill, I have been acting for him, and I assure you I have hardly five minutes to myself to thank you for your elegant present of Pindar. The typography is admirable, and worthy of the truly original bard.

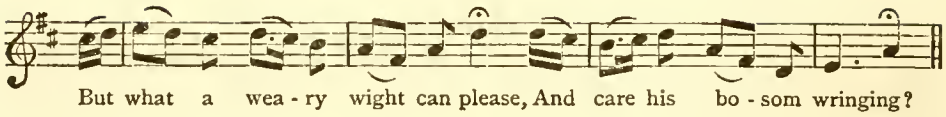
I do not give you the foregoing song for your book, but merely by way of *vive la bagatelle;* for the piece is not really poetry. How will the following do for "Craigieburn Wood?"—

VERY SLOW, WITH EXPRESSION. TUNE—"Craigieburn Wood."

Sweet fa's the eve on Craig-ie - burn, And blythe a - wakes the morrow,

But a' the prid o' spring's re - turn Can yield me nocht but sor - row.

I see the flow'rs and spreading trees, I hear the wild birds sing - ing;



(*See* page 52, Vol. VI.)

Farewell! God bless ye! R. B.

(24) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 30*th Jan.* 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you heartily for "Nannie's Awa," as well as for "Craigieburn," which I think a very comely pair. Your observation on the difficulty of original writing in a number of efforts in the same style, strikes me very forcibly; and it has again and again excited my wonder to find you continually surmounting this difficulty, in the many delightful songs you have sent me. Your *vive la bagatelle* song, "For a' that," shall undoubtedly be included in my list.

G. T.

(43) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[DUMFRIES, 6*th February* 1795.]*

I AM afraid, my dear Sir, that printing your songs in the manner of Ritson's would counteract the sale of your greater work; but secluded as I am from the world, its humors and caprices, I cannot pretend to judge in the matter. If you are ultimately frustrated of Pleyel's assistance, what think you of applying to Clarke? This, you will say, would be breaking faith with your subscribers; but, bating that circumstance, I am confident that Clarke is equal, in Scottish song, to take up the pen even after Pleyel.

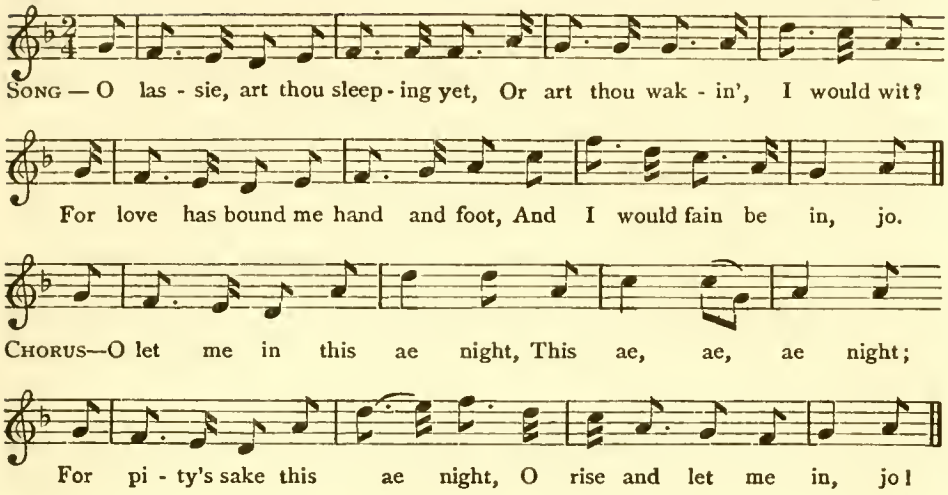
I shall, at a future period, write you my sentiments as to sending my bagatelles to a newspaper.

Here is another trial at your favorite air:—

* Through some delay in posting, this letter did not reach Edinburgh till 9th Feb.

SONG.

SLOWISH. TUNE—"Let me in this ae night."



(*See* page 63, Vol. VI.)*

I do not know whether it will do. Yours ever,

R. B.

(44) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

ECCLEFECHAN, *7th February* 1795.

MY DEAR THOMSON,—You cannot have any idea of the predicament in which I write you. In the course of my duty as supervisor (in which capacity I have acted of late) I came yesternight to this unfortunate, wicked little village.† I have gone forward, but snows of ten feet deep have impeded my progress; I have tried to "gae back the gate I cam again," but the same obstacle has shut me up within insu-

* The MS. contains the following, as verse third of the lover's part of the song; but the poet writes on the margin thus:—"I do not know but this stanza may as well be omitted.—*R. B.*"

"Thy kith and kin look down on me,
A simple lad o' low degree;
Sae I maun try frae love to flee,
Across the raging main, jo."

These lines seem like the reflection of his own experience in 1786.

† Dr. Currie has a note here:—"The poet must have been tipsy indeed to abuse sweet Ecclefechan so."

perable bars. To add to my misfortune, since dinner, a scraper has been torturing catgut, in sounds that would have insulted the dying agonies of a sow under the hands of a butcher, and thinks himself, *on that very account*, exceedingly good company. In fact, I have been in a dilemma, either to get drunk, to forget these miseries; or to hang myself, to get rid of them; like a prudent man (a character congenial to my every thought, word, and deed), I, of two evils, have chosen the least, and am very drunk at your service! *

I wrote you yesterday from Dumfries. I had not time *then* to tell you all I wanted to say; and, heaven knows, at present I have not capacity.

Do you know an air—I am sure you must know it—"We'll gang na mair to yon town?" I think, in slowish time, it would make an excellent song. I am highly delighted with it; and if you should think it worthy of your attention, I have a fair dame in my eye to whom I would consecrate it; try it with this doggrel, until I give you a better. You will find a good set of it in Bowie's collection.

"*Chorus*—O wat ye wha's in yon town,
Ye see the e'enin sun upon;
The dearest maid's in yon town
That e'enin sun is shinin on.

"O sweet to me yon spreading tree,
Where Jeanie wanders aft her lane;
The hawthorn flower that shades her bower,
O when shall I behold again?
"O wat ye wha's," &c.

As I am just going to bed, I wish you a good night. R. B.

* Thomson also has appended a note thus:—"The handwriting shows it, and I can swear to the truth.—G. T."

P.S.—As I am likely to be storm-stead here to-morrow, if I am in the humor, you shall have a long letter from me. R. B.

(25) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 25*th February* 1795.

I HAVE to thank you, my dear Sir, for two epistles—one containing "Let me in this ae night," and the other from Ecclefechan, proving that, drunk or sober, your "mind is never muddy." You have displayed great address in the above song. Her answer is excellent, and at the same time takes away the indelicacy that otherwise would have attached to his entreaties. I like the song, as it stands, very much.

I had hopes you would be arrested some days at Ecclefechan, and be obliged to beguile the tedious forenoons by song-making. It will give me pleasure to receive the verses you intend for "O wat ye wha's in yon town?" G. T.

(45) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[*April* 1795.]

SONG.

Tune—"We'll gang nae mair to yon town."

"O wat ye wha's in yon town,
Ye see the e'enin sun upon?
The fairest Dame's in yon town
That e'enin sun is shinin on," &c.

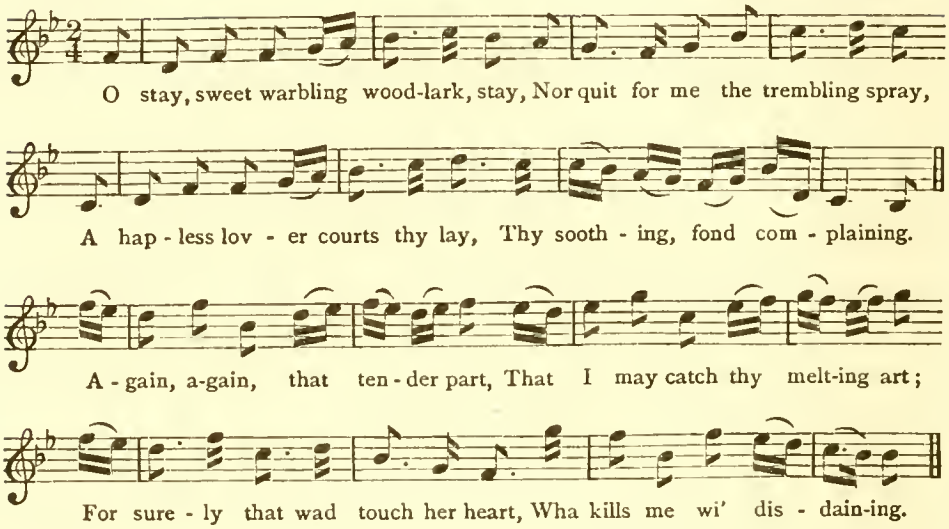
(*See* page 67, Vol. VI.)

Your objection to the last two stanzas of my song, "Let me in this ae night," does not strike me as just. You will take notice that my heroine is replying quite at her ease, and when she talks of "faithless man," she gives not the least reason to believe that she speaks from her own experience, but merely from observation, of what she has seen around her. But of all boring matters in this boring world, criticising my own works is the greatest bore.

SONG.

Tune—"Where'll bonie Ann lie?" *

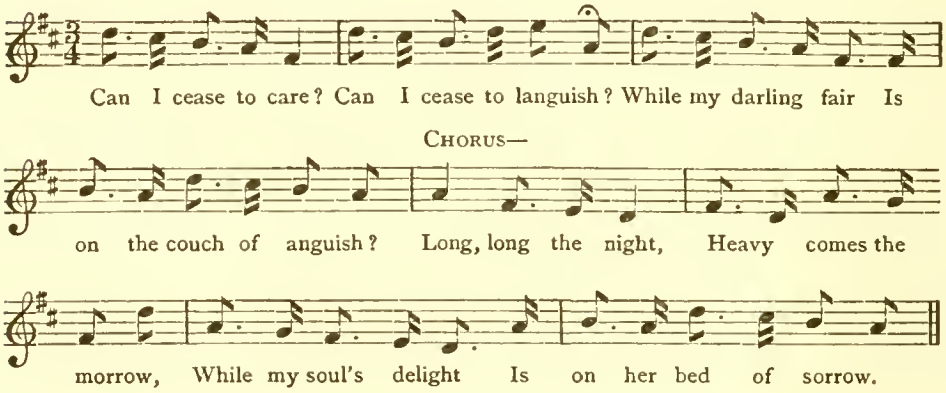
ANDANTE. TUNE—"Loch-Erroch Side."



(*See* page 88, Vol. VI.)

SONG ON CHLORIS BEING ILL.

SLOW. TUNE—"Ay Waukin, O!"



(*See* page 89, Vol. VI.)

[Considerable uncertainty exists as to where the best set of this air is to be found—no two collections showing it in the same form. We therefore annex what we believe to be the pure melody, avoiding the absurdity of adding two or three unmeaning words and notes (Ay waukin O!) to make each verse end on the key-note.]

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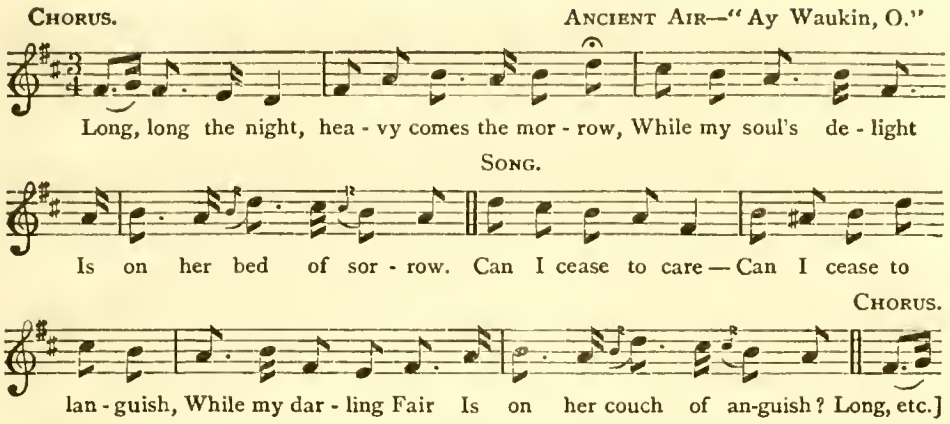
* A still better tune would be "Loch Erroch Side," the rhythm of which it suits better than the drawling stuff in the *Museum*.—*R. B.*



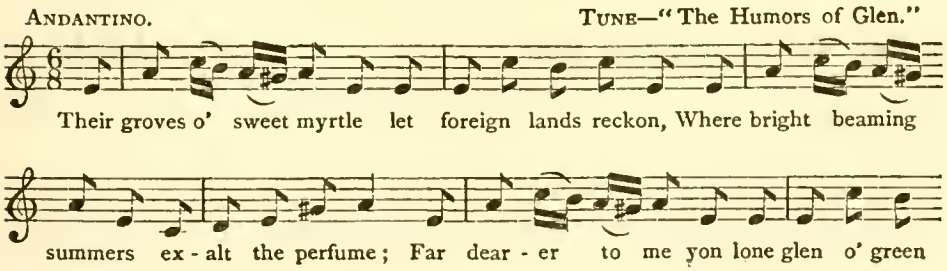
How do you like the foregoing? As to my address to the woodlark, "Johnie Cope" is an air would do it very well; still, whether it be the association of ideas, I cannot say, but there is a squalidity, an absence of elegance in the sentiment and expression of that air that does not altogether suit the spirit and delicacy I have endeavored to transfuse into the song.

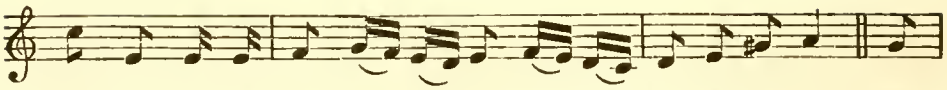
As to English verses for "Craigieburn," you have them in Ritson's English selection, vol. 1st, song 22nd, by Sir Walter Raleigh, beginning

"Wrong not, sweet mistress of my heart."

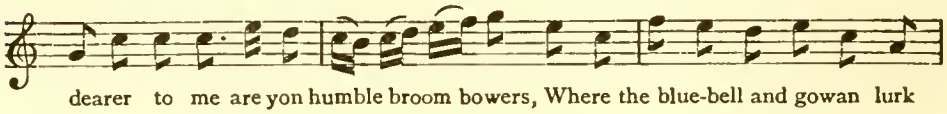
The "Lammy" is an air that I do not much like. "Laddie, lie near me," I am busy with, and in general, have them all in my eye. The Irish air "Humors of Glen" is a great favorite of mine, and as, except the silly verses in the "Poor Soldier," there are not any decent words for it, I have written for it as follows:

SONG.

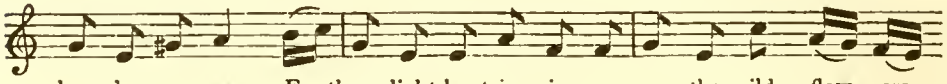




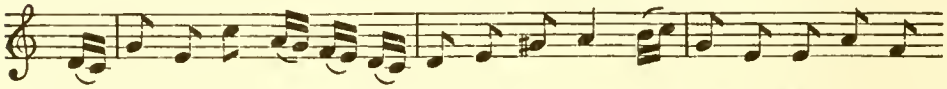
breckan, Wi' the burn steal - ing un - der the lang yel - low broom: Far



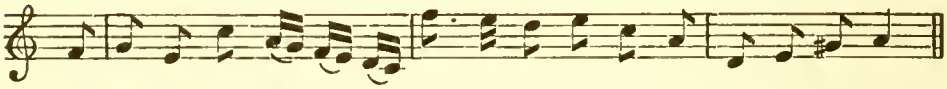
dearer to me are yon humble broom bowers, Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk



low - ly un - seen; For there, light-ly trip - ping a - mang the wild flow - ers,



A - list'ning the lin - net, aft wanders my Jean, For there, lightly tripping



a - mang the wild flow - ers, A - listening the linnet, aft wanders my Jean.

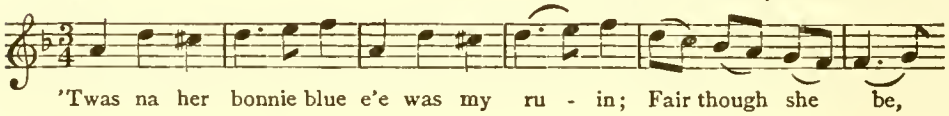
(*See* page 94, Vol. VI.)

Yours, R. B.

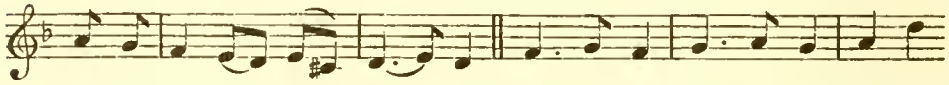
[Stop! turn over.]

SONG.

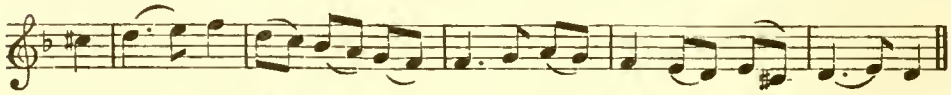
SLOW. TUNE—"Laddie, lie near me."



'Twas na her bonnie blue e'e was my ru - in; Fair though she be,



that was ne'er my un - do - ing: 'Twas the dear smile when nae - bo - dy



did mind us, 'Twas the be - witching, sweet stown glance o' kind - ness.

(*See* page 92, Vol. VI.)

Let me hear from you. R. B.

(26) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *May* 1795.

YOU must not think, my good Sir, that I have any intention to enhance the value of my gift when I say, in justice to the ingenious and worthy artist, that the design and execution of "The Cotter's Saturday Night" is, in my opinion, one of the happiest productions of Allan's pencil. I shall be grievously disappointed if you are not quite pleased with it.

The figure intended for your portrait, I think strikingly like you, as far as I can remember the phiz.* This should make the piece interesting to your family every way. Tell me whether Mrs. Burns finds you out among the figures.

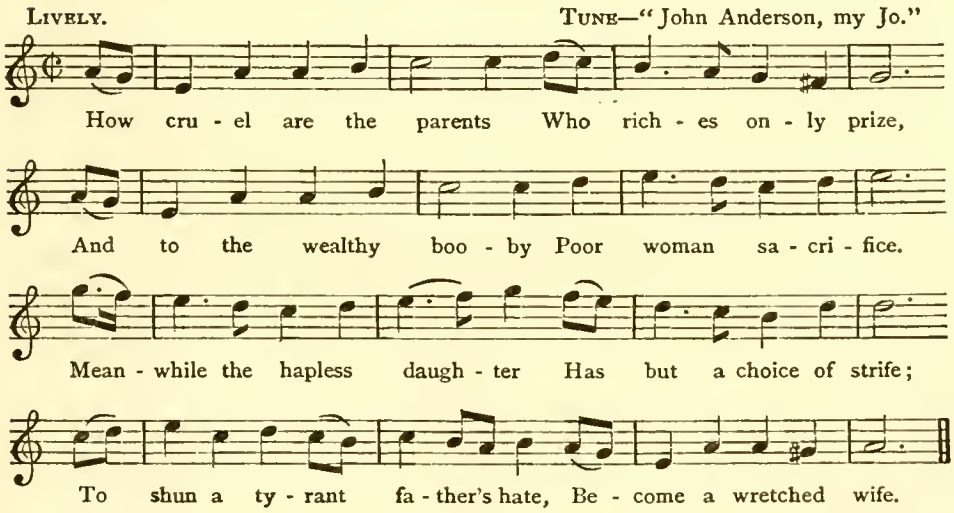
I cannot express the feeling of admiration with which I have read your pathetic "Address to the Woodlark," your elegant panegyric on Caledonia, and your affecting verses on Chloris's illness. Every repeated perusal of these gives new delight. The other song to "Laddie, lie near me," though not equal to these, is very pleasing. G. T.

(46) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

May 9, 1795.

SONG, ALTERED FROM AN OLD ENGLISH ONE.

LIVELY. TUNE—"John Anderson, my Jo."



(*See* page 90, Vol. VI.)

* That is to say—"As I remember the phiz in Beugo's engraving from Nasmyth's picture;" for he never saw Burns in the flesh.

SONG.

ANDANTE. TUNE—"Deil tak' the Wars."

Mark yonder pomp of cost - ly fash - ion Round the wealthy,
titl - ed bride: But when com - par - ed with real pas - sion,
Poor is all that prince - ly pride. What are the showy treasures? What
are the noisy pleasures? The gay, gaudy glare of van - i - ty and art: The
polished jewel's blaze May draw the wond'ring gaze, And courtly grandeur bright
The fancy may delight, But never, never can come near the heart.

(*See* page 91, Vol. VI.)

Well! this is not amiss. You see how I answer your orders—your tailor could not be more punctual. I am just now in a high fit of poetising, provided that the strait-jacket of Criticism don't cure me. If you can, in a post or two, administer a little of the intoxicating potion of your applause, it will raise your humble servant's frenzy to any height you want. I am at this moment "holding high converse" with the Muses, and have not a word to throw away on such a Prosaic dog as you are. R. B.

(47) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[*May* 1795.]

TEN thousand thanks for your elegant present,* though I am ashamed of the value of it being bestowed on a man who has not by any means merited such an instance of kindness. I have shown it to two or three judges of the first abilities here, and they all agree with me in classing it a first-rate production. My phiz is sae kenspeckle, that the very joiner's apprentice whom Mrs. Burns employed to break up the parcel (I was out of town that day), knew it at once. You may depend on my care that no persons shall have it in their power to take the least sketch from it. My most grateful compl'nts to Allan, that he has honored my rustic Muse so much with his masterly pencil. One strange coincidence is that the little one who is making the felonious attempt on the cat's tail, is the most striking likeness of an ill-deedie, damned wee, rumble-gairie hurchin of mine, whom, from that propensity to witty wickedness and manfu' mischief, which, even at twa days auld, I foresaw would form the striking features of his disposition, I named "Willie Nicol," after a certain friend of mine, who is one of the masters of a Grammar-school in a city which shall be nameless. Several people think that Allan's likeness of me is more striking than Nasmyth's, for which I sat to him half-a-dozen times. However, there is an artist of very considerable merit just now in this town, who has hit the most remarkable likeness of what I am at this moment, that I think ever was taken of anybody.†

* A water-color drawing by David Allan, the subject taken from the "Cotter's Saturday Night."

† The question regarding the several miniature likenesses of Burns that were executed during his latter days, is discussed in Vol. VI. We have the pleasure to present the reader with an engraving from the portrait referred to, Burns aged 36.

It is a small miniature, and as it will be in your town getting itself be-crystalized, &c., I have some thoughts of suggesting to you to prepare a vignette taken from it, to my song "Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair," in order the portrait of my face and the picture of my mind may go down the stream of Time together.

Now to business. I enclose you a song of merit, to a well known air, which is to be one of yours. It was written by a lady, and has never yet seen the press. If you like it better than the ordinary "Woo'd and married," or if you choose to insert this also you are welcome; only, return me the copy. "The Lothian Lassie" I also enclose; the song is well known, but was never in notes before. The first part is the old tune. It is a great favorite of mine, and here I have the honor of being of the same opinion with STANDARD CLARKE. I think it would make a fine andante ballad.

Give the enclosed epigram to my much-valued friend, Mr. Cunningham, and tell him, that on Wednesday I go to visit a friend of his, to whom his friendly partiality in speaking of the Bard, in a manner, introduced me. I mean a well known Military and Literary character, Colonel Dirom. As to what you hint of my coming to Edinburgh, I know of no such arrangement.*

You do not tell me how you liked my last two songs? Are they condemned? Yours, R. B.

---

* The reference here is to a plan which some of the poet's friends had proposed to the Commissioners of Excise, "to appoint him to a respectable office at Leith, with an easy duty, and with emoluments rising nearly to 200*l.* per annum." Professor Walker, in his biography of Burns, mentions such a proposal as having been on the *tapis* for the benefit of the bard. "But," he adds, "all the friendly designs of his patron (Mr. Graham of Fintry) were frustrated by the imprudence of the poet, and by that ill luck which, in his case, made every act of imprudence create more than its adequate measure of punishment. Burns stood on a lofty eminence, surrounded by enemies as well as by friends, and no indiscretion which he committed was suffered to escape."—*Perth Edition*, 1811, page xcvii., Vol. I.

([27]) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 13*th May* 1795.

IT gives me great pleasure to find that you are all so well satisfied with Mr. Allan's production. The chance resemblance of your little fellow, whose promising disposition appeared so very early, and suggested whom he should be named after, is curious enough. I am acquainted with that person, who is a prodigy of learning and genius, and a pleasant fellow, though no saint.

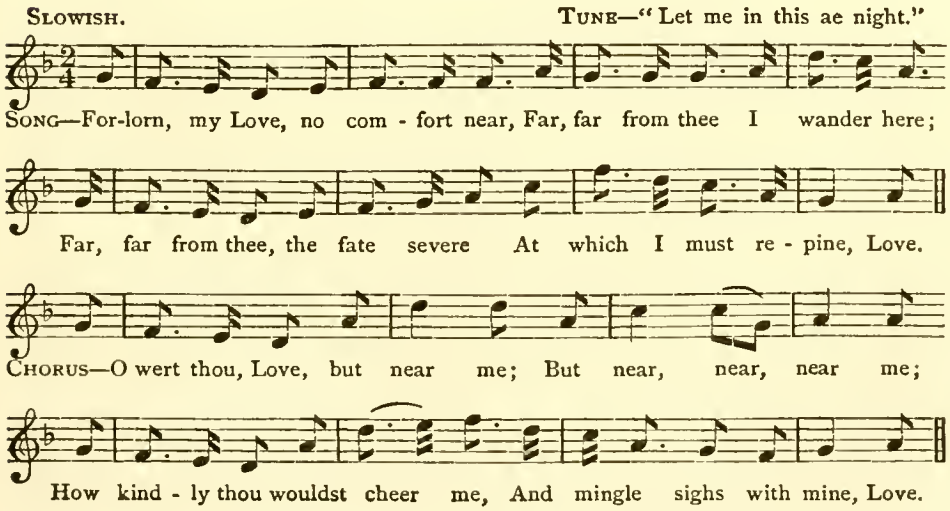
You really make me blush when you tell me you have not merited the drawing from me. I do not think I can ever repay you, or sufficiently esteem or respect you, for the liberal and kind manner in which you have entered into the spirit of my undertaking, which could not have been perfected without you. So I beg you will not make a fool of me again by speaking of obligation.

I like your two last songs very much, and am happy to find you are in such a high fit of poetising. Long may it last! Clarke has made a fine pathetic air to Mallet's superlative ballad of "William and Margaret," and is to give it to me, to be enrolled among the elect. G. T.

([48]) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[*June* 1795.]

SONG.



(*See* page 95, Vol. VI.)

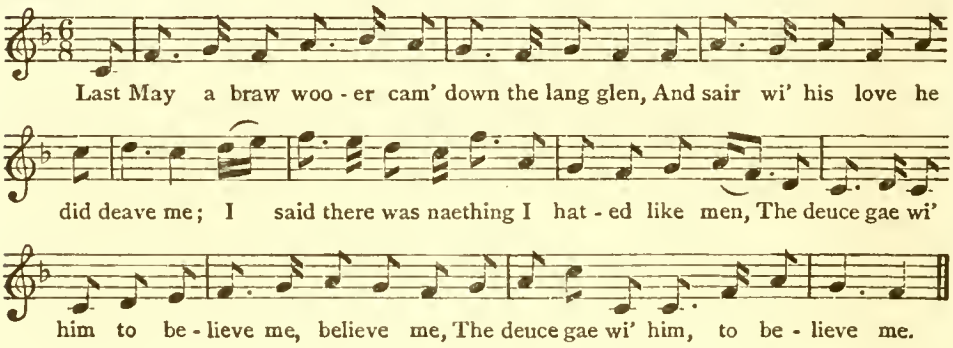
How do you like the foregoing? I have written it within this hour: so much for the *speed* of my Pegasus; but what say you to his bottom? R. B.

(49) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[*July 3rd*, 1795.]

SCOTS BALLAD.

MODERATO. TUNE—"The Lothian Lassie."



(*See* page 97, Vol. VI.)

FRAGMENT.

Tune—"The Caledonian Hunt's Delight."

Why, why tell the lover,
  Bliss he never must enjoy?
Why, why undeceive him,
  And give all his hopes the lie?

O why, while Fancy, raptur'd, slumbers—
  Chloris, Chloris, all the theme—
Why, why wouldst thou, cruel
  Wake thy lover from his dream?*

Such is the damned peculiarity of the rhythm of this air, that I find it impossible to make another stanza to suit it.

"This is no my ain house" puzzles me a good deal; in fact I think to change the old rhythm of the first, or chorus part of the tune, will have a good effect. I would have it something like the gallop of the following:

* Thomson has a marginal note here, thus:—"Instead of this poor song I will take the one, 'Ye Banks and Braes o' bonie Doon" for the Air here mentioned. But I propose attaching this to some other Air, if I find one to suit it.—G. T."

SONG.

Tune—"This is no my ain house."

Chorus—O this is nae my ain Body,
Fair tho' the Body be;
O weel ken I my ain Body,
Kind love is in her e'e.

I see a form, I see a face,
Ye weel may wi' the fairest place;
It wants to me the witching grace,
The kind love that's in her e'e.
O this is nae my ain, &c.

I am at present quite occupied with the charming sensations of the toothache, so have not a word to spare.* I know your letters come post-free to you, so I trouble you with the enclosed, which, as it is a business letter, please cause to be delivered at first convenience. Yours, R. BURNS.

(28) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *3rd July*, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your English verses to "Let me in this ae night" are tender and beautiful; and your ballad to the "Lothian Lassie" is a master-piece for its humor and naïveté. The fragment for the "Caledonian Hunt" is quite suited to the original measure of the air, and as it plagues you so, the fragment must content it. I would rather, as I said before, have had bacchanalian words, had it so pleased the poet; nevertheless, for what we have received, Lord, make us thankful! G. T.

(50) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

August 2d, 1795.

YOUR objection is just as to the verse of my song [Forlorn, my Love]. I hope the following alteration will please you:—

* The poet's letter of 30th May 1795 to Mr. Creech makes a similar allusion to being troubled with the toothache, a disease which he so well describes in one of his poems so early as 1789. See page 126, Vol. III.

Cold, alter'd friends, with cruel art,
Poisoning fell Misfortune's dart—
Let me not break thy faithful heart,
And say that fate is mine, love.

Did I mention to you that I wish to alter the first line of the English song "Leiger 'm choss," alias "The Quaker's Wife," from

Thine am I, my faithful Fair,

to

Thine am I, my Chloris fair?

If you neglect the alteration, I call on all the NINE, conjunctly and severally, to anathematise you.*

In "Whistle and I'll come to you, my Lad," the iteration of that line is tiresome to my ear—here goes the old first four lines of every stanza, and then follows what I think is an improvement:—

O whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad,
O whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad,
Tho' father and mother and a' should gae mad,
O whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad.

alter to

O whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad,
O whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad,
Tho' father and mother and a' should gae mad,
Thy Jeanie will venture wi' ye, my lad.

In fact, a fair Dame, at whose shrine I, the Priest of the Nine, offer up the incense of Parnassus—a Dame whom the Graces have attired in witchcraft, and whom the Loves have armed with lightning—a Fair One, *herself the heroine of the song*, insists on the amendment, and dispute her commands if you dare! †

"Gateslack," the word you object to in my last ballad, is positively the name of a particular place, a kind of passage up among the Lawther hills, on the

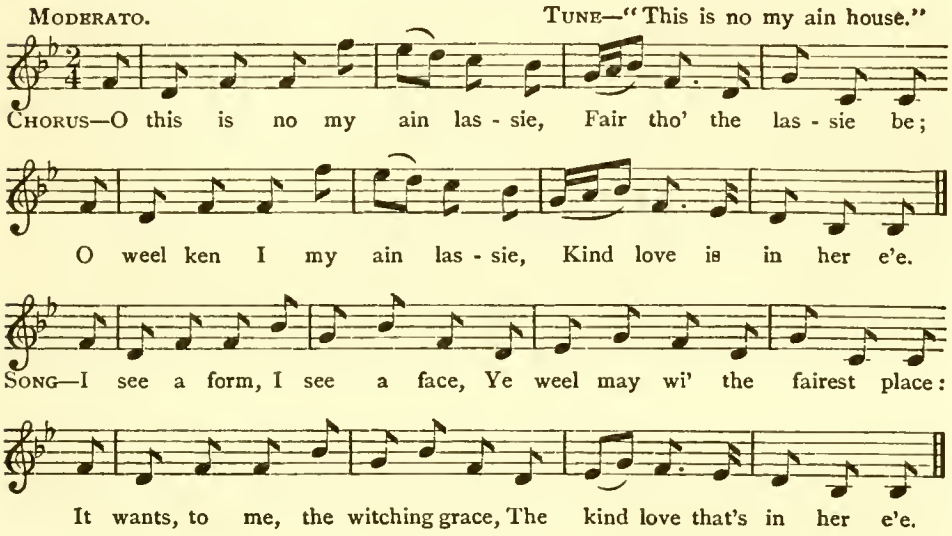
* Here Burns confirms his former order to cut out the name of the first inspirer of the song—"Nancy," the *Clarinda* of his former devotion—and coolly substitutes that of his presently reigning divinity.

† Dr. Currie's note on this subject is given in connexion with Thomson's reply to the present letter.

confines of this county. "Dalgarnock" is also the name of a romantic spot, near the Nith, where are still a ruined church and a burial place. However, let the line run, "He up the lang loan," &c.

"This is nae my ain Body," alter into "This is no my ain lassie."

SONG.



(*See* page 99, Vol. VI.)

Do you know that you have roused the torpidity of Clarke at last? He has requested me to write three or four songs for him, which he is to set to music himself. The enclosed sheet contains two songs for him: the sheet please to present to my very much valued friend whose name is at the bottom of the sheet. I will write him a long letter one of these days. I enclose the sheet, both for your inspection, and that you may copy off the song, "O bonie was yon rosy brier." I do not know whether I am right, but that song pleases me; and as it is extremely probable that Clarke's newly-roused celestial spark will be soon smothered in the fogs of Indolence, if you like the song, it will go as Scottish verses to the air, "I wish my Love was in a mire;" and poor Mr. Erskine's English lines may follow.

I enclose you a "For a' that, and a' that," * which was never in print: it is a much superior song to mine. I have been told that it was composed by a lady:—

SONG.

ANDANTE. TUNE—"I wish my Love were in a mire."

O bon-nie was yon ro - sy brier, That blooms sae far frae haunt o' man;

And bon-nie she, ah, and how dear! It shad-ed frae the e'en-in' sun.

Yon rosebuds in the morn-ing dew, How pure a-mang the leaves sae green;

But pur-er was the lov-er's vow They witness'd in their shade yestreen.

(*See* page 100, Vol. VI.)

SCOTCH SONG.

SLOW. TUNE—"The Hopeless Lover."

Now Spring has clad the grove in green, And strew'd the lea wi' flowers;

The fur-row'd, wav-ing corn is seen Re - joice in fos - ter-ing showers;

While il - ka thing in Nature join Their sor - rows to fore - go,

O why thus all a - lone are mine The wea - ry steps of wo?

(*See* page 101, Vol. VI.)

INSCRIPTION TO CHLORIS,

ON A BLANK LEAF OF THE LAST EDITION OF MY POEMS.

'Tis Friendship's pledge, my young, fair Friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse,
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralising Muse, &c.

(*See* page 105, Vol. VI.)

* The lady's "For a' that," here so much praised, has not been preserved by Thomson in the correspondence. In his reply he speaks slightingly of it.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Une bagatelle de l'amitié.

—COILA.

(29) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *August 3rd* 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,—This will be delivered to you by a Dr. Brianton, who has read your works, and pants for the honor of your acquaintance. I do not know the gentleman; but his friend, who applied to me for this introduction, being an excellent young man, I have no doubt he is worthy of all acceptation.

My eyes have just been gladdened, and my mind feasted, with your last packet—full of pleasant things indeed. What an imagination is yours! it is superfluous to tell you that I am delighted with all the three songs, as well as with your elegant and tender verses to Chloris.

I am sorry you should be induced to alter "O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad," to the prosaic line, "Thy Jeanie will venture wi' ye, my lad." I must be permitted to say that I do not think the latter either reads or sings so well as the former. I wish, therefore, you would in my name petition the charming Jeanie, whoever she be, to let the line remain unaltered.*

I should be happy to see Mr. Clarke produce a few airs to be joined to your verses. Everybody regrets his writing so very little, as everybody acknowledges his ability to write well. Pray, was the resolution formed coolly, before dinner, or was it a midnight vow, made over a bowl of punch with the bard?

I shall not fail to give Mr. Cunningham what you have sent him.

P.S.—The lady's "For a' that, and a' that," is sensible enough, but no more to be compared to yours, than I to Hercules. G. T.

* Dr. Currie has the following note here:—"The editor, who has heard the heroine of this song sing it herself in the very spirit of arch simplicity that it requires, thinks Mr. Thomson's petition unreasonable." This is of a piece with the doctor's theory of the heroineship of "Sweet Afton." He means here that he had heard Mrs. Maria Riddell sing the song, and hint that she herself was its heroine—rather an odd confession to proceed from a married lady! Burns's demand made to Thomson to alter the closing line of the chorus, removes all indefiniteness as to the "fair Dame" who forms the subject of the song. He insists on the introduction of the name "Jeanie," to shew that no one but Jean Lorimer can lay claim to be its inspirer.

[The hiatus of seven months which here occurs in the *Thomson Correspondence*, is somehow mysteriously connected with the poet's passion for Jean Lorimer. The reader, by referring to page 167, and tracing the narrative downwards to page 181, of Vol. VI., will see all that is known of the poet's history during that interval.]

(30) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *5th Feb.* 1796.

"O Robby Burns, are ye sleeping yet?
Or are ye wauken, I would wit?"

THE pause you have made, my dear Sir, is awful! Am I never to hear from you again? I know, and I lament how much you have been afflicted of late; but I trust that returning health and spirits will now enable you to resume the pen, and delight us with your musings. I have still about a dozen Scotch and Irish airs that I wish "married to immortal verse." We have several true-born Irishmen on the Scottish list; but they are naturalised, and reckoned our own good subjects. Indeed, we have none better. I believe I before told you, that I have been much urged by some friends to publish a collection of all our favorite airs and songs in octavo, embellished with a number of etchings by our ingenious friend Allan; what is your opinion of this? G. T.

(51) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

February 1796.

MANY thanks, my dear Sir, for your handsome, elegant present to Mrs. B.* and for my remaining volume of P. Pindar. Peter is a delightful fellow, and a first favorite of mine. Now to business. How are you paid by your subscribers here? I gave you in the names of Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, and his brother, Walter Riddell of Woodley Park. Glenriddell subscribed only for the Songs: Walter Riddell for both the Songs and Sonatas. Glenriddell's widow, to whom he left all his fortune, lives now in your

* This was a worsted shawl.

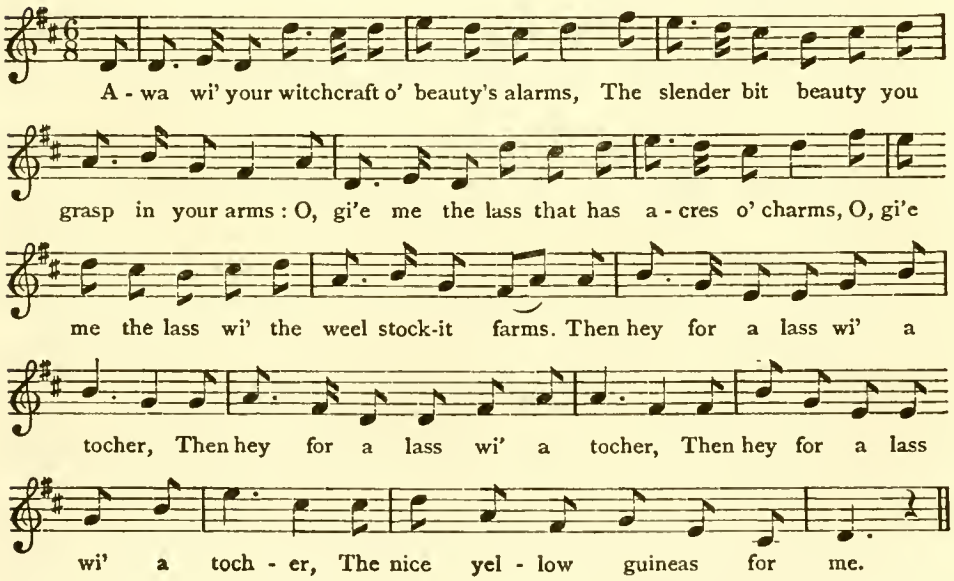
town, and Walter is also at present in it: call on them for their cash. I mention these matters because probably you have a delicacy on my account, as if I had presented them with their copies—a kindness neither of them deserves at my hands. They are bona fide subscribers, and as such treat them. I also supplied another subscriber, Mr. Sharpe of Hoddam, with the second set of Sonatas (my own copy); so charge him accordingly. Mr. Gordon of Kenmure, who subscribed for the Songs only, unknown to me at the time, in a money transaction where I was concerned, paid the 10s. 6d. to my account. So there I am your debitor.

I am much pleased with your idea of publishing a collection of our songs in octavo with etchings. I am extremely willing to lend every assistance in my power. The Irish airs I shall cheerfully undertake the task of finding verses for.

I have already, you know, equipt three with words, and the other day I strung up a kind of rhapsody to another Hibernian melody which I admire much.

HEY FOR A LASS WI' A TOCHER.

TUNE—"Ballinamona Ora."



(*See* page 121, Vol. VI.)

If this will do, you have now four of my Irish engagement — Humors of Glen, Captain O'Kean, Oonagh's Waterfall, and Balinamona. In my by-past songs I dislike one thing—the name Chloris. I meant it as the fictitious name of a certain lady; but, on second thoughts, it is a high incongruity to have a Greek appellation to a Scottish pastoral ballad. Of this and some things else in my next: I have more amendments to propose. What you mentioned, of "flaxen locks," is just: they cannot enter into an elegant description of beauty.* Of this again—God bless you! R. B.

(31) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

[*Feb.* 1796.]

YOUR "Hey for a Lass wi' a Tocher" is a most excellent song, and with you the subject is something new indeed. It is the first time I have seen you debasing the god of self-desire into an amateur of acres and guineas.

I am happy to hear you approve of my proposed octavo edition. Allan has designed and etched about twenty plates for that work. Independently of the Hogarthian humor with which they abound, they exhibit the character and costume of the Scottish peasantry with inimitable felicity. In this respect, he himself says, they will far exceed the aquatinta plates he did for the "Gentle Shepherd," because in the etching he sees clearly what he is doing, but not so with the aquatinta, which he could not manage to his mind. The Dutch boors of Ostade are scarcely more characteristic and natural than the Scottish figures in these etchings. G. T.

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* The reader will remember that in August 1795—exactly six months prior to this period—Burns was iu the full height of his adoration of this "certain lady." She was then "the peerless Queen of Womankind." There seems to be fair room for conjecture that, in the obscure interval, some blighting influence or damning circumstance must have swayed the poet's estimate of Jean Lorimer.

([52]) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[*April* 1796.]

ALAS! my dear Thomson, I fear it will be some time ere I tune my lyre again! "By Babel streams," &c. Almost ever since I wrote you last, I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of Sickness, and have counted time by the repercussions of pain! Rheumatism, cold, and fever, have formed, to me, a terrible Trinity in Unity, which makes me close my eyes in misery and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say with poor Fergusson—

> "Say wherefore has an all-indulgent Heaven
> Light to the comfortless and wretched given?"

This will be delivered to you by a Mrs. Hyslop, landlady of the Globe Tavern here, which for these many years has been my Howff, and where our friend Clarke and I have had many a merry squeeze. I mention this, because she will be a very proper hand to bring that seal you talk of. I am highly delighted with Mr. Allan's etchings; "Woo'd and Married an' a'," is admirable! The grouping is beyond all praise. The *expression* of the figures, conformable to the story in the ballad, is absolutely faultless perfection. I next admire "Turnimspyke." What I like least is "Jenny said to Jocky." Besides the female being in her appearance quite a virago, if you take her stooping into the account, she is at least two inches taller than her lover.

I will thank you much for a number or two of that magazine you mention. Poor Cleghorn! I sincerely sympathise with him. Happy I am to think he yet has a well-grounded hope of health and enjoyment in this world. As for me—but this is a damning subject! Farewell! R. B.

(32) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

4th May 1796.

I NEED not tell you, my good Sir, what concern the receipt of your last gave me, and how much I sympathise in your sufferings. But do not, I beseech you, give yourself up to despondency, nor speak the language of despair. The vigor of your constitution, I trust, will soon set you on your feet again; and then it is to be hoped you will see the wisdom and the necessity of taking due care of a life so valuable to your family, to your friends, and to the world.

Trusting that your next will bring agreeable accounts of your convalescence, and returning good spirits, I remain, with sincere regard, yours, G. T.

P.S.—Mrs. Hyslop, I doubt not, delivered the gold seal to you in good condition.

(53) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[Date, about 18*th May* 1796.]

MY DEAR SIR, — Inclosed is a certificate, which (though a little different from Mr. M'Knight's model) I suppose will amply answer the purpose, and I beg you will prosecute the miscreants without mercy. When your Publication is finished, I intend publishing a collection, on a cheap plan, of all the songs I have written for you, the *Museum*, &c.,—at least, of all the songs of which I wish to be called the author. I do not propose this so much in the way of emolument, as to do justice to my Muse, lest I should be blamed for trash I never saw, or be defrauded by other claimants of what is justly my own. The post is going, I will write you again to-morrow. Many, many thanks for the beautiful seal. R. B.

The *seal* alluded to in the close of the above letter is the one designed by the poet himself, and commissioned from Edin-

burgh more than two years previously.* It reached him at a period, alas! when few opportunities remained for him to use it. The certificate or mandate of Burns in favor of George Thomson regarding the copyright of the songs, has not been preserved along with the foregoing letter. Its mysterious disappearance as well as the suppression of the letter give a "hole and corner" appearance to this portion of the correspondence, which is far from satisfactory. There was nothing improper in Mr. Thomson honestly applying to Burns, even on his deathbed, to be secured against the songs being used in any rival publication; but it is to be suspected that his design, in this emergency, was to extract something more. What he did ask from the dying poet can only be inferred from the reply; it is clear that he sought to alarm Burns with some news of piracy. The five songs of Burns which Thomson had hitherto published, were "Gala Water," "Auld Rob Morris," "Open the door to me, oh," "Wandering Willie," and "The Sodger's Return." Some of these may have been reprinted in the magazines; and it is probable that "The Sodger's Return" had been set up in broadsheet, and sung through the streets. "I beg you will prosecute the miscreants without mercy," was the poet's excited reply; but he declined to adopt the formal document drafted by Thomson's agent, and preferred to indite his own certificate. Moreover, as if to guard against the idea that the copyright of the songs was absolutely transferred to Thomson, he proceeds to explain, that when that gentleman's musical work shall be completed he intends to publish his songs on his own account.

Nothing however is clearer than the fact, that in dealing with the poet's literary executors, Mr. Thomson obtained credit for allowing the songs and the correspondence to be printed for the benefit of the bard's family. The reader however will observe, from the subjoined list of those songs which Thomson published on his own account before the date of Currie's first edition, that any advantage arising from the first appearance of Burns's songs in print had been almost monopolised by Thomson himself before the surrender referred to. When he published his second half volume in August 1798, he prefaced it with an "Address to the Public," in which he announces his absolute right of property in "about fifty songs by Burns never before published," and appends a copy of the poet's certificate to that effect, in the following terms:—

* See letter to Cunningham (page 397, Vol. IV.), dated March 3, 1794.

"I Do hereby certify and declare, That ALL
" the Songs of my writing, published and to be
" published by Mr. George Thomson of Edin-
" burgh, are so published by my authority. And
" moreover, That I never empowered any other
" person whatever to publish any of the Songs
" written by me for his Work. And I authorise
" him to prosecute, in his own name, any person
" or persons who shall publish any of those
" Songs, without his consent. In testimony
" whereof, &c., ROBERT BURNS."

It does not seem a very extraordinary thing that, under the circumstances, our poet should have written and signed the above; and if Mr. Thomson had only seen fit to produce the writer's manuscript, along with the rest of the correspondence, the authenticity of the document could never have been challenged. That Burns did send Mr. Thomson some kind of certificate, or written authority to prosecute offenders against the right of property in the songs, is manifest; but there is unfortunately too much room to doubt the foregoing to be a genuine copy of the poet's document. People who addict themselves to petty manœuvre and stratagem in transacting business with honest and unsuspecting neighbors, are apt to outwit themselves occasionally. Mr. Thomson afterwards, in course of vending his "select melodies and songs," published another version of the poet's mandate in his favor; and the latter one exhibits a few unexpected verbal differences when compared with its predecessor. We shall append them here in parallel columns, so that the reader at a glance may distinguish the alterations. The question will arise:—"Which of these is the genuine one? Are either of them genuine? or, Are they both genuine?"—

First Version.

I Do hereby certify and declare, That ALL the Songs of my writing, published and to be published by Mr. George Thomson of Edinburgh, are so published by my authority. And moreover, That I never empowered any other person whatever to publish any of the Songs written by me for his Work. And I authorise him to prosecute, in his own name, any person or persons who shall publish any of those Songs, without his consent. In testimony whereof, &c.

ROBERT BURNS.

Second Version.

I do hereby certify that all the songs of my writing, published and to be published by Mr. GEORGE THOMSON of Edinburgh, are so published by my Authority. And moreover, that I never empowered any other person to publish any of the songs written by me for his work. And I authorise him to prosecute any person or persons who shall publish or vend ANY of those songs without his consent. In testimony whereof, &c.,

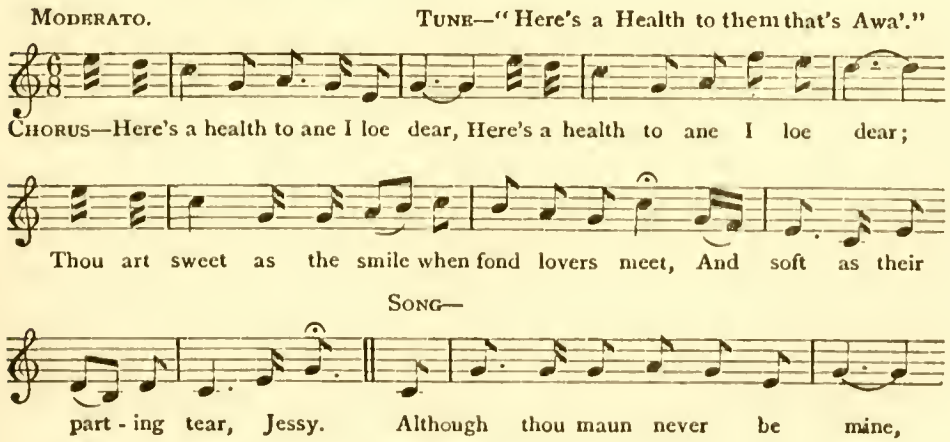
ROBERT BURNS.

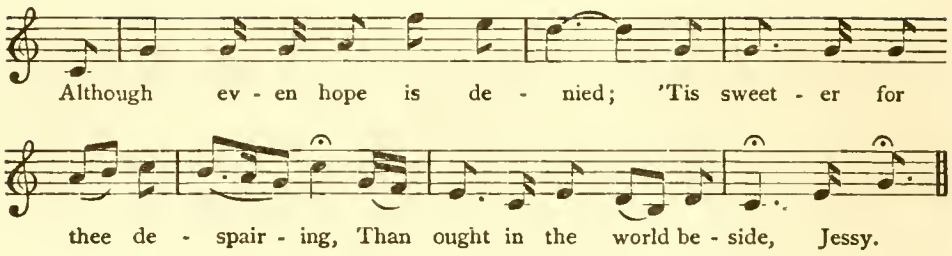
(54) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[*May* 1796.]

MY DEAR SIR,—I once mentioned to you an air which I have long admired—"Here's a health to them that's awa, hiney;" but I forget if you took any notice of it. I have just been trying to suit it with verses; and I beg leave to recommend the air to your attention once more. I have only begun with it:—

SONG.





(*See* page 127, Vol. VI.)

This will be delivered by a Mr. Lewars, a young fellow of uncommon merit; indeed, by far the cleverest fellow I have met with in this part of the world. His only fault is D-m-cratic heresy. As he will be a day or two in town, you will have leisure, if you choose, to write me by him; and if you have a spare half-hour to spend with him, I shall place your kindness to my account.

I have no copies of the songs I have sent you, and I have taken a fancy to review them all, and possibly may mend some of them; so when you have complete leisure, I will thank you for either the Originals or copies. I had rather be the author of five well-written songs than of ten otherwise. My verses to "Cauld Kail" I will suppress; and also those to "Laddie, lie near me." They are neither worthy of my name nor of your book.* I have great hopes that the genial influence of the approaching summer will set me to rights, but as yet I cannot boast of returning health. I have now reason to believe that my complaint is a flying gout—a d—nable business!

Do, let me know how Cleghorn † is, and remember me to him.—Yours ever, R. BURNS.

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* See Vol. VI., pp. 32 and 92. Chloris is the subject of them both.

† We have searched the printed obituaries in vain for the date of Robert Cleghorn's death; but apparently he did not long survive Burns. In August 1796 he subscribed two guineas towards the relief of the poet's family, Mrs. Cleghorn at same time subscribing one guinea. The death of his daughter is noted in the *Scots Magazine* as having occurred in July 1804, and she is there designed as "daughter of the deceased Mr. Robert Cleghorn of Saughton Mills." His widow resided at Kinleith Mills, near Currie, when the daughter died.

[*Turn over.*]

This should have been delivered to you a month ago, but my friend's trunk miscarried, and was not recovered until he came home again. I am still very poorly, but should like much to hear from you.

R. B.

The above letter (like that addressed to James Johnson,—*see* page 194, Vol. VI.) was finally despatched by post on 16th June. Mr. John Lewars, the brother of Jessy, the heroine of the song, was then a bachelor, and five years younger than Burns. He was subsequently appointed a supervisor of excise in Dumfries (a post formerly filled by his late father), and he retired from the service in 1825, and died in 1826.

On 26th June, the poet penned his beautiful inscription to Jessy Lewars in the copy of Johnson's *Museum* then presented to her, and on the morning of Monday 4th July, he removed to sea-bathing quarters at Brow.

([55]) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

(CHAMBERS' EDITION, 1852.)

BROW, *4th July* 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,—I received your songs; but my health is so precarious, nay dangerously situated, that, as a last effort, I am here at sea-bathing quarters. Besides my inveterate rheumatism, my appetite is quite gone, and I am so emaciated as to be scarce able to support myself on my own legs. Alas! is this a time for me to woo the Muses? However, I am still anxiously willing to serve your work, and, if possible, shall try. I would not like to see another employed, unless you could lay your hand upon a poet whose productions would be equal to the rest. You will see my remarks and alterations on the margin of each song. My address is still Dumfries. Farewell, and God bless you!

R. BURNS.

(56) BURNS TO MR. THOMSON.

[Brow, on the Solway Frith, 12*th July* 1796.]

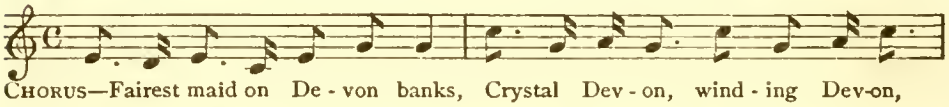
After all my boasted independence, curst Necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel scoundrel of a Haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness; but the horrors of a jail have made me half distracted. I do not ask all this gratuitously; for upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds' worth of the neatest song-genius you have seen. I tried my hand on "Rothiemurchie" this morning. The measure is so difficult, that it is impossible to infuse much genius into the lines: they are on the other side. Forgive, forgive me!

Yours, R. Burns.

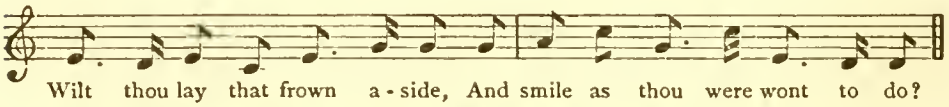
[*Turn.*]

SONG.

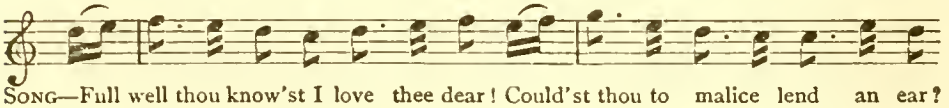
Moderato. Tune—"Rothiemurche's Rant."



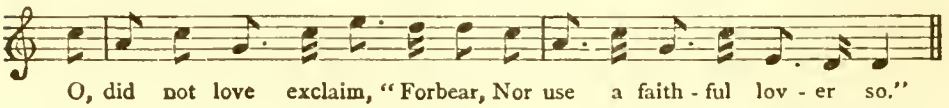
Chorus—Fairest maid on De - von banks, Crystal Dev - on, wind - ing Dev-on,



Wilt thou lay that frown a - side, And smile as thou were wont to do?



Song—Full well thou know'st I love thee dear! Could'st thou to malice lend an ear?



O, did not love exclaim, "Forbear, Nor use a faith - ful lov - er so."

(*See* page 132, Vol. VI.)

([33]) MR. THOMSON TO BURNS.

[14*th July* 1796.]

My Dear Sir,—Ever since I received your melancholy letters by Mrs. Hyslop [in April], I have been ruminating in what manner I could endeavor to alleviate your sufferings. Again and again I thought of a pecuniary offer, but the recollection of one of your letters on this subject, and the fear of offending your independent spirit, checked my resolution. I thank you heartily, therefore, for the frankness of your letter of the 12th, and with great pleasure enclose a draft for the very sum I proposed sending. Would I were Chancellor of the Exchequer but for one day, for your sake!

Pray, my good Sir, is it not possible for you to muster a volume of poetry? If too much trouble to you in the present state of your health, some literary friend might be found here, who would select and arrange your manuscripts, and take upon him the task of editor. In the meantime, it could be advertised to be published by subscription. Do not shun this mode of obtaining the value of your labor; remember Pope published the *Iliad* by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not reckon me intrusive with my advice. You are too well convinced of the respect and friendship I bear you, to impute anything I say to an unworthy motive.

Yours faithfully, G. T.

The verses to "Rothiemurchie" will answer finely. I am happy to see you can still tune your lyre.

Here ends, with the life of Burns, this interesting and valuable correspondence. We have no inclination to join the ranks of those who are very hard in their censures of Mr. Thomson, in respect of his pecuniary dealings with the Bard; for after the proud and determined style of independence in which Mr. Thomson's little donation of 1st July 1793 was received, he had a difficult part to perform. It is a pity he limited his last remittance to "the very sum I proposed sending," in response to the imploring request so affectingly made by his distracted correspondent; but we must defer to the opinion of Lord Cockburn in this matter. On 3rd March 1847, within four years from the day when Thomson expired at the age of 94, a superb silver vase with inscription—the contribu-

tion of one hundred gentlemen of Edinburgh—was presented to him in testimony of their respect and esteem. On that occasion his lordship said:—"As to the imputations on Mr. Thomson in connexion with the history of Burns I have long ago studied the matter with as much candor as any man could apply to a subject in which he had no personal interest, and my clear conviction is, not only that all those imputations are groundless, but that, if Mr. Thomson were now placed in the same situation in which he was then, nothing different or better could be done."

Mr. Thomson, during the period of his connection with the bard, made him two remittances of five pounds each; and sent Burns a copy of Ritson's English Songs, and of Peter Pindar's works. He also bestowed three or four copies of part first of his own publication, and presented to Mrs. Burns a Paisley shawl, and a drawing by David Allan, representing the family worship scene in "The Cotter's Saturday Night." After the poet's death, he gave two guineas to the Edinburgh subscription for the family, and allowed Dr. Currie to publish the songs Burns had written for him, with the relative correspondence, which latter he took the trouble to arrange. We also find that in 1800 he presented volume second of his collection of songs to Gilbert Burns, who acknowledged the gift in these terms: "If ever I come to Edinburgh, I will certainly avail myself of your invitation to call on a person whose handsome conduct to my brother's family has secured my esteem, and confirmed to me the opinion that musical taste and talents have a close connexion with the harmony of the moral feelings."

We shall now conclude this department of our work by giving a few particulars regarding the publication in which Burns took so much interest, and so liberally helped with the effusions of his genius.

The editor's preface to his first half-volume, folio-size, consisting of 25 songs harmonised by Pleyel, is dated "Blair Street, Edinburgh, 1st May 1793." It contains only five songs written by our poet for that publication. These we have already enumerated, and another song "My Nannie, O," previously published, was added to the number.

The second half-volume of Thomson's songs appeared in August 1798 (two years after the poet's death). Besides embracing ten songs borrowed from Johnson's *Museum*, it contained eleven songs written expressly for Thomson, namely,

1. Duncan Gray cam here to woo.
2. Deluded swain, the pleasure.
3. Here is the glen and here the bower.
4. How lang and dreary is the night.
5. Let not woman e'er complain.
6. O mirk, mirk is the midnight hour.
7. O poortith cauld and restless love.
8. O stay, sweet warbling woodlark, stay.
9. O saw ye bonie Leslie.
10. Sweet fa's the eve on Craigieburn.
11. True-hearted was he, the sad swain of the Yarrow.

Volume second of Thomson's work, containing fifty songs with accompaniments by Pleyel and Kozeluch, appeared in July 1799. Besides twelve songs by Burns, borrowed from Johnson's *Museum*, it includes 28 lyrics expressly written for Thomson's publication. Those marked with an asterisk in the following list, had been communicated by the author to Johnson also, in whose publication they appeared in December 1796.

1. Adown winding Nith I did wander.
2. Awa' wi' your witchcraft o' beauty's alarms.
3. Blythe hae I been on yon hill.
4. By Allan stream I chanced to rove.
5. Come let me take thee to my breast.
6. Contented wi' little and canty wi' mair.
7. Farewell thou stream that winding flows.
8. Had I a cave on some wild, distant shore.
9. Here's a health to ane I loe dear.
10. How cruel are the parents.
11. Husband, husband, cease your strife.
12. It was the charming month of May.
13. Last May a braw wooer cam doun the lang glen.*
14. Now in her green mantle blythe Nature arrays.
15. Now rosy May comes in wi' flowers.
16. Now Spring has clad the groves in green.
17. O this is no my ain lassie.

* In Johnson's sixth vol. (1803) appeared a version of this popular song, beginning, "Ae day a braw wooer cam doun the lang glen," and shewing several verbal changes (among these the happy one, "my auld shoon," instead of "her new shoon"). Stenhouse, in his annotations, 1820, averred that Burns had composed the song in 1787 for Johnson who, from religious scruples, forebore to publish it till Dr. Currie printed *the very inferior version* supplied to Thomson in July 1795! Piratical fraud, backed by literary impudence, scarcely ever went beyond this.

18. O wat ye wha that loes me?
19. O wat ye wha's in yon town?*
20. O whistle and I'll come to you, my lad.
21. Scots wha hae (Tune "Lewie Gordon").
22. Should auld acquaintance be forgot?*
23. The groves o' sweet myrtle.
24. The small birds rejoice.
25. Thine am I, my faithful Fair.
26. Thou hast left me ever, Jamie.
27. Wilt thou be my dearie!*
28. Ye banks and braes and streams around.

The reader will observe from the foregoing lists that before the appearance of Currie's first edition for behoof of the widow and family of the poet, Thomson had given to the public, on his own account, forty-four of the songs written for him by Burns.

The preface to Thomson's third volume of his "Select Collection of Scottish Songs" is dated December 1801. It contains fourteen of Burns's lyrics taken from Johnson's *Museum*, while it includes only seven* of those expressly composed for his own publication, namely:—

1. Behold, my love, how green the groves.
2. Fairest maid on Devon banks.
3. Lassie wi' the lint-white locks.
4. Long, long the night.
5. O Logan, sweetly didst thou glide.
6. O bonie was yon rosy brier.
7. Where are the joys I hae met in the morning.

Volume IV. of Thomson's publication appeared in 1805, containing, besides eleven of Burns's songs from other sources, thirteen that had been composed for his own work. One of these however—"Sae flaxen were her ringlets"—had been published in 1796 by Johnson, to whom also the bard had given it.

1. Behold the hour, the boat arrive.
2. Forlorn my love, no comfort near.
3. Hark, the mavis e'ening sang.

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* In this volume the famous ode, "Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled," is again introduced, but restored to its first and best form, and set to its own proper tune. Thomson's apologetic note will be found at page 231, *supra*.

4. How can my poor heart be glad?
5. Is there for honest poverty.
6. Mark yonder pomp of costly fashion.
7. O lassie art thou sleepin yet?
8. O Philly, happy be the day.
9. O were my love yon lilac fair.
10. Sae flaxen were her ringlets.
11. Sleep'st thou, or wak'st thou, fairest creature?
12. There was a lass and she was fair.
13. When o'er the hills the eastern star.

Volume V. and last of Thomson's collection appeared in 1818. The only song it contains expressly written for that work by Burns, is headed thus,

"My wife's a winsome wee thing,—by Burns and Thomson."

It contains also "Mary Morison" which was presented to Thomson, although not composed for him.

In 1822, Mr. Thomson published the long-promised octavo edition of his collection of Scottish songs, with the airs and accompaniments; these extended to six volumes, the last of which appeared in May 1825, the price of each volume being 10s. 6d. At that date he advertised that he was re-engraving the music plates of his folio collection, which would be sold at these prices:—

Scottish Songs in five vols. folio, at 21s. each.
Irish Songs, in three vols. folio, at 15s. each.
Welsh Songs, in two vols. folio, at 15s. each.

Some of these bear the date 1831; and during twenty years thereafter, the venerable song-editor continued to vend his books and draw in "the bawbees."

[Our opinion is that Burns was much to be pitied for his unbusiness-like liberality to Thomson; and Thomson is still more to be blamed for his selfish shifts and lack of generosity to the poet's family after the decease of the Bard.—G. G.]

FIRST COMMON-PLACE BOOK.

OBSERVATIONS, HINTS, SONGS, SCRAPS OF POETRY, &c., BY ROBT. BURNESS.

(*Printed verbatim from the original MS.*)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THIS unique manuscript, extended in a stitched book of twenty-two leaves folio, was purchased by John Adam, Esq., Town Chamberlain, Greenock, in 1861; its previous owner having been J. L. Sangford, Esq., of the Temple. Sundry markings on it shew that it had passed through the hands of Currie, who printed from it the song "Handsome Nell." That editor, however, seems to have thrown it aside; for instead of selecting examples of the poet's first Common-place Book from the original MS., he preferred to give the brief abridgement of it inscribed by Burns in the volume of Letters which he wrote out for Mr. Robert Riddell of Glenriddell. This early manuscript, in a few years thereafter, came into the hands of Cromek, who, in his *Reliques* (1808), professed to print the document entire; yet he not only presented it in a very incomplete form, but confused it by interpolating passages from other manuscripts of Burns; in particular, that very interesting one headed "Egotisms from my own sensations," which never formed a portion of this Common-place Book. Where Cromek obtained those additions, embracing the *Elegy on Robert Ruisseaux*, the song *Rantin, rovin Robin*, and two song-fragments, one of which refers to the poet's anticipated expatriation, does not appear, and the MS. has not yet turned up. Cromek has dove-tailed those "Egotisms" into his version of the early Common-place Book, as of date *May* 1785; but the pieces, from internal evidence, apparently belong to the year following.

The manuscript, of which, by the kindness of the owner, we are now enabled to present to the reader a perfect reproduction, bears every mark of integrity and completeness, and seems to be as fresh as the day when its author put his last touch to it in October 1785. There are sundry judicious notes scattered throughout its pages, bearing the initials "J. S.," which are recognised to be in the hand-writing of John Syme, Esq., of Ryedale. He accompanied Gilbert Burns on his visit to Dr. Currie of Liverpool, to place in that biographer's hands the materials for the Life and Works of the Poet. There appears also a series of earlier notes signed "W. R.," which indicate that Burns in 1786 had submitted the MS. to a Mauchline friend bearing those initials, for his advice as to what pieces might be extracted from it to help his Kilmarnock edition. The annotations of that person are in the highest degree absurd and conceited, and we have little hesitation in assigning them to William Ronald, tobacconist and merchant in Mauchline, who assumed at that time to be one of the poet's patrons. Burns, in a letter to his brother William in November 1789, refers to the "insolent vanity" of Ronald during former sunshiny days, and contrasts that with his present bankruptcy.

To render our print of this Common-place Book complete, we not only introduce the notes referred to, but give the text *verbatim et literatim*, exhibiting even defective spelling and punctuation where these occur. Such minuteness seems requisite and even interesting to the reader, as marking the gradual development of the poet in his course of self-education, and shewing the labors through which he ultimately mastered the niceties of his art. It is proper to add that in 1872 a privately printed copy of this Greenock MS., was executed in Edinburgh, and circulated to a limited extent. It is a creditable performance, but unfortunately the letterpress was set up, not from the manuscript itself, but from a transcript of it by an amanuensis who has failed to produce an exact rendering of the original. Possessors of that printed copy are invited to compare it with what we now present.

"Examined—J. S., 30th Aug. 1797."

Observations, Hints, Songs, Scraps of Poetry &c. by Robt Burness; a man who had little art in making money, and still less in keeping it; but was, however, a man of some sense, a great deal of honesty, and

unbounded good-will to every creature rational or irrational.—As he was but little indebted to scholastic education, and bred at a plough-tail, his performances must be strongly tinctured with his unpolished, rustic way of life; but as I believe, they are really his own, it may be some entertainment to a curious observer of human-nature to see how a Ploughman thinks, and feels, under the pressure of Love, Ambition, Anxiety, Grief, with the like cares and passions, which, however diversified by the Modes, and Manners of life, operate pretty much alike I believe, in all the Species.

"There are numbers in the world, who do not want sense, to "make a figure; so much as an opinion of their own abilities, to "put them upon recording their observations, and allowing them "the same importance which they do to those which appear in "print."—SHENSTONE

"Pleasing when youth is long expir'd to trace,
"The forms our pencil, or our pen design'd!
"Such was our youthful air and shape and face!
"Such the soft image of our youthful mind"

IBIDEM.*

X April—83. Notwithstanding all that has been said against Love respecting the folly & weakness it leads a young unexperienced mind into; still I think it, in a great measure, deserves the highest encomiums that have been passed upon it. If any thing on earth deserves the name of rapture or transport it is the feelings of green eighteen † in the company of the

* In the original MS. this note occurs here:—

"The following pieces marked thus X appear to J. S. to be agreeable and interesting—not only from their own merit but from the circumstances and time in which they must have been written. The observations &c. made by Burns give them additional value. The maxims and remarks also seem to me to be worthy of being published for the same reason."

† In the MS., by means of deletion and interpolation, the poet's characteristic expression "green eighteen" has been changed by some clumsy critic into the prosaic phrase "a youth at eighteen." The student of Burns will recognise in this brief entry of April 1783 the germ of one of the finest stanzas in "The Cotter's Saturday Night."

Burns' First Love, Nellie Kilpatrick

O' ONCE I LOV'D A BONIE LASS
AYE, AND I LOVE HER STILL,
AND WHILST THAT VIRTUE WARMS MY BREAST,
I'LL LOVE MY HANDSOME NELL.

mistress of his heart when she repays him with a equal return of affection.

Aug. There is certainly some connection between Love, and Music, & Poetry; and therefore, I have always thought it a fine touch of Nature, that passage in a modern love composition

"As towards her cot he jogged along"
"Her name was frequent in his song"

For my own part I never had the least thought or inclination of turning Poet till I got once heartily in Love, and then Rhyme and Song were in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart. The following composition was the first of my performances, and done at an early period of life, when my heart glowed with honest warm simplicity; unacquainted, and uncorrupted with the ways of a wicked world. The performance is, indeed, very puerile and silly: but I am always pleased with it, as it recals to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest and my tongue was sincere. The subject of it was a young girl who really deserved all the praises I have bestowed on her. I not only had this opinion of Her then—but I actually think so still, now that the spell is long since broken, and the inchantment at an end.

X SONG.—(*Tune*—"I am a man unmarried.")

1.

O once I lov'd a bonny lass
Ay and I love her still
And whilst that honor warms my breast
I'll love my handsome Nell
Fal lal de lal &c.

2.

As bonny lasses I hae seen,
And mony full as braw;

But for a modest gracefu' mien,
  The like I never saw.

3.

A bonny lass I will confess
  Is pleasant to the e'e;
But without some better qualities
  She's no a lass for me.

4.

But Nelly's looks are blythe and sweet,
  And what is best of a',
Her reputation is compleat
  And fair without a flaw.

5.

She dresses ay sae clean and neat,
  Both decent and genteel;
And then there's something in her gate
  Gars ony dress look weel.

6.

A gaudy dress and gentle air
  May slightly touch the heart;
But it's innocence and modesty
  That polishes the dart.

7.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me;
  'Tis this inchants my soul;
For absolutely in my breast
  She reigns without controul.

FINIS.

X Critisism on the Foregoing Song.

Lest my works should be thought below Criticism; or meet with a Critic who, perhaps, will not look on them with so candid and favorable an eye; I am determined to criticise them myself.

The first distic of the first stanza is quite too much in the flimsy strain of our ordinary street ballads; and on the other hand, the second distic is too much in the other extreme. The expression is a little akward, and the sentiment too serious. Stanza the second I am well pleased with; and I think it conveys a fine idea of that amiable part of the Sex—the agreables; or what in our Scotch dialect we call a sweet sonsy Lass. The third Stanza has a little of the flimsy turn in it; and the third line has rather too serious a cast. The fourth Stanza is a very indifferent one; the first line is, indeed all in the strain of the second Stanza, but the rest is mostly an expletive. The thoughts in the fifth Stanza come finely up to my favorite idea a sweet sonsy Lass: the last line however, halts a little. The same sentiments are kept up with equal spirit and tenderness in the sixth Stanza but the second and fourth lines ending with short syllables hurts the whole. The seventh Stanza has several minute faults; but I remember I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it, but my heart melts, and my blood sallies at the remembrance.

Sept. I intirely agree with that judicious Philosopher Mr Smith in his excellent Theory of Moral Sentiments, that Remorse is the most painful sentiment that can embitter the human bosom. Any ordinary pitch of fortitude may bear up tolerably well, under those calamities, in the procurement of which, we ourselves have had no hand; but when our own follies or crimes, have made us miserable & wretched, to bear it up with manly firmness, and at the same time have

a proper penitential sense of our misconduct,—is a glorious effort of Self-command.

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace;
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish;
Beyond comparison the worst are those
By our own folly, or our guilt brought on.
In ev'ry other circumstance the mind
Has this to say, it was no deed of mine:
But, when to all the evil of misfortune
This sting is added, blame thy foolish self;
Or worser far, the pangs of keen remorse:
The tort'ring, gnawing consciousness of guilt—
Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involved others;
The young, the innocent, who fondly lov'd us:
Nay more, that very love their cause of ruin—
O! burning Hell, in all thy store of torments
There's not a keener Lash ———
Lives there a man so firm who, while his heart
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down it's agonizing throbs,
And, after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace.
O happy, happy, enviable man!
O glorious magnanimity of soul!

March—84. A penitential thought, in the hour of Remorse, Intended for a tragedy

All devil as I am, a damned wretch;
A hardened, stubborn, unrepenting villain:
Still my heart melts at human wretchedness;
And with sincere, though unavailing sighs
I view the helpless children of distress.
With tears indignant I behold th' Oppressor
Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction
Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime.
Even you, ye hapless crew, I pity you,

Ye, whom the seeming good think sin to pity;
Ye, poor, despis'd, abandon'd vagabonds
Whom Vice as usual, has turn'd o'er to ruin.
O but for kind, though ill requited friends
I had been driven forth like you forlorn
The most detested, worthless wretch among ye:
O! injur'd God! thy goodness has endow'd me
With talents passing most of my compeers,
Which I in just proportion have abus'd,
As far surpassing other common villains
As Thou in nat'ral parts hast given me more

I have often observed in the course of my experience of human life that every man even the worst, have something good about them, though very often nothing else than a happy temperament of constitution inclining them to this or that virtue; on this likewise, depend a great many, no man can say how many of our vices; for this reason no man can say in what degree any person besides himself can be, with strict justice called wicked.—Let any of the strictest character for regularity of conduct among us, examine impartially how many of his virtues are owing to constitution & education; how many vices he has never been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but from want of opportunity, or some accidental circumstance intervening; how many of the weakness's of mankind he has escaped because he was out of the line of such temptation; and, what often, if not always, weighs more than all the rest; how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know all; I say any man who can thus think, will scan the failings, nay the faults & crimes of mankind around him, with a brother's eye.—*

* The reader will scarcely fail to see that the above paragraph contains an outline of the author's famous poetical "Address to the Unco Gude, or the Rigidly Righteous," published in 1787.

March—84. I have often coveted the acquaintance of that part of mankind commonly known by the ordinary phrase of BLACKGUARDS, sometimes farther than was consistent with the safety of my character; those who by thoughtless prodigality, or headstrong passions have been driven to ruin;—though disgraced by follies, nay sometimes "Stain'd with guilt, and crimson'd o'er with crimes;" I have yet found among them, not a few instances, some of the noblest Virtues, Magnanimity Generosity, disinterested friendship and even Modesty, in the highest perfection.*

March—84. There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broke by repeated losses & disasters, which threatened, and indeed effected the utter ruin of my fortune. My body, too was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a Hypochondria, or confirmed Melancholy: in this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the Willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the following—

X O Thou great Being! what Thou art
Surpassest me to know:
Yet sure I am that known to thee
Are all affairs below.

Thy creature here before thee stands,
All wretched & distrest;
Yet sure those ills that press my soul
Obey thy high behest.

---

* "My experience of this class has been very much the reverse of that of Burns. I have usually found their virtues of a merely theatrical cast, and their vices real; much assumed generosity in some instances, but a callousness of feeling, and meanness of spirit, lying concealed beneath."—HUGH MILLER, 1854.

(Without controverting Hugh Miller's estimate of the average city "blackguard" of modern times, we can easily appreciate how the Bohemianism of the 18th century could not but have attractions for the Bohemian blood that coursed in the veins of Burns.—J. H.)

Sure Thou all Perfect canst not act
  From cruelty, or wrath :
O ! free my weary eyes from tears,
  Or close them fast in death.

But if I must afflicted be
  To suit some wise design ;
O ! man my soul with firm resolves
  To bear and not repine.

Finis.

X April—As I am, what the men of the world, if they knew of such a man, would call a whimsical Mortal ; I have various sources of pleasure & enjoyment which are, in a manner, peculiar to myself ; or some here & there such other out-of-the-way person.—Such is the peculiar pleasure I take in the season of Winter, more than the rest of the year.—This, I believe, may be partly owing to my misfortunes giving my mind a melancholy cast ; but there is something even in the—

"Mighty tempest & the hoary waste
"Abrupt & deep stretch'd o'er the buried earth—"

which raises the mind to a serious sublimity, favorable to every thing great & noble.—There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I don't know if I should call it pleasure, but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood or high plantation, in a cloudy, winter day, and hear a stormy wind howling among the trees & raving o'er the plain.*—It is my best season for devotion ; my mind is rapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him who, in the pompous

* A note by Mr. John Syme occurs here in the original MS. : "I have heard the Bard frequently enforce the same remark, viz., that Winter-wild, raving, tempestuous weather charmed him most.—J. S."

language of Scripture, "Walks on the wings of the wind."—In one of these seasons, just after a tract of misfortunes I composed the following

SONG.—(*Tune* "M'Pherson's Farewel.")

1

The wintry West extends his blast
  And hail & rain does blaw;
Or the stormy North sends driving forth
  The blinding sleet & snaw:
And tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
  And roars frae bank to brae;
And bird & beast in covert rest,
  And pass the weary day.

2

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"
  The joyless winter day;
Let others fear, to me more dear
  Than all the pride of May—
The tempest's howl it sooths my soul,
  My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
  There fate resembles mine.

3.

Thou Power Supreme whose mighty scheme,
  These woes of mine fulfil:
Here firm, I rest, they must be best,
  Because they are thy will:
Then all I want—(O do Thou grant
  This one request of mine;)
Since to enjoy, Thou dost deny,
  Assist me to resign.

(Finis.)

April—The following Song is a wild Rhapsody miserably deficient in Versification, but as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over.

SONG.—(*Tune* "The weaver & his shuttle O.")

X I like the following.—J. S.

My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border O
And carefully he bred me, in decency & order O
He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing O
For without an honest manly heart, no man was worth regarding O

Chorus—Row de dow &c.

Then out into the world my course I did determine. O
Tho' to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charming. O
My talents they were not the worst; nor yet my education: O
Resolv'd was I, at least to try, to mend my situation. O

In many a way, & vain essay, I courted fortune's favoor; O
Some cause unseen, still stept between, & frustrate each endeavor; O
Some times by foes I was o'erpower'd; sometimes by friends forsaken; O
And when my hope was at the top, I still was worst mistaken, O

Then sore harass'd & tir'd at last, with fortune's vain delusion; O
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams; and came to this conclusion; O

The past was bad, & the future hid; its good or ill
untryed; O
But the present hour was in my pow'r & so I would
enjoy it, O

No help, nor hope, nor view had I; nor person to
befriend me; O
So I must toil, & sweat & moil, & labor to sustain
me, O
To plough & sow, to reap & mow, my father bred
me early, O
For one, he said, to labor bred, was a match for
fortune fairly, O

Thus all obscure, unknown, & poor, thro' life I'm
doom'd to wander, O
Till down my weary bones I lay in everlasting
slumber; O
No view nor care, but shun whate'er might breed me
pain or sorrow; O
I live to-day as well's I may, regardless of to-morrow, O

But chearful still, I am as well as a Monarch in a
palace; O
Tho' fortune's frown still hunts me down with all
her wonted malice: O
I make indeed, my daily bread, but ne'er can make
it farther; O
But as daily bread is all I need, I do not much
regard her. O

When sometimes by my labor I earn a little money, O
Some unforseen misfortune comes generally upon me; O
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect, or my good natur'd
folly; O
But come what will I've sworn it still, I'll ne'er be
melancholy, O

All you who follow wealth & pow'r with unremitting ardor, O
The more in this you look for bliss, you leave your view the farther; O
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore you, O
A chearful honest-hearted clown, I will prefer before you. O *

April—Shenstone observes finely that love-verses writ without any real passion are the most nauseous of all conceits; and I have often thought that no man can be a proper critic of Love composition, except he himself, in one, or more instances, have been a warm votary of this passion. As I have been all along, a miserable dupe to Love, and have been led into a thousand weaknesses & follies by it, for that reason I put the more confidence in my critical skill in distinguishing FOPPERY & CONCEIT, from real PASSION & NATURE.—Whether the following song will stand the test, I will not pretend to say, because it is MY OWN; only I can say it was, at the time, REAL.

SONG.—(*Tune* "As I came in by London O.")

Behind yon hills where Stincher flows
'Mong muirs & mosses many, O
The weary sun the day has clos'd
And I'll awa to Nanie. O

Chorus—And O my bonny Nannie O,
My young, my handsome Nannie O
Tho' I had the world all at my will,
I would give it all for Nanie. O

* In the original MS., this note here occurs (a judicious pen has scored it through):—"I don't think the above will do unless it get a sound harrowing.—W. R."

The westlin win' blaws loud & shill,
  The night's baith dark & rainy O;
But I'll get my plaid & out I'll steal
  And o'er the hill to Nanie O.

My Nanie's charming, sweet, & young;
  Nae artfu' wiles to win ye O:
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
  That would beguile my Nanie O.

Her face is fair, her heart is true,
  As spotless as she's bonny O;
The op'ning gowan wet wi' dew
  Nae purer is than Nanie O.

A country lad is my degree
  And few there be that ken me O;
But what care I how few they be,
  I'm welcome ay to Nanie O.

My riches a's my pennie fee
  And I maun guide it canny O
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me
  My thoughts are a' about Nanie O.

Our Guidman delights to view
  His sheep & his ky thrive bonny; O
But I'm as blythe that hauds his plew
  And haes nae care but Nanie O.

Come weel, come woe, I care na by
  I'll tak' what Heaven will sen' me O;
Nae other care in life have I
  But live and love my Nanie O.

  And O my bonny Nanie O;
  My young, my handsome Nanie O

Tho' I had the world all at my will
I would give it all to Nanie O.*

April—Epitaph on Wm. Hood Senr., in Tarbolton.

Here Souter Hood in death does sleep;
To Hell if he's gane thither,
Satan, gie him thy gear to keep;
He'll haud it weel the gither.

On Jas. Grieve, Laird of Boghead, Tarbolton.

Here lies Boghead amang the dead,
In hopes to get salvation;
But if such as he, in Heav'n may be,
Then welcome, hail! damnation.

April—Epitaph on my own friend, & my father's friend, Wm. Muir in Tarbolton Miln.

Here lies a chearful, honest breast,
As e'er God with his image blest.
The friend of Man, the friend of Truth;
The friend of age, & guide of youth.
Few hearts like his with Virtue warm'd
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd,
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

April—Epitaph on my ever honored Father

O ye! who sympathise with Virtue's pains!†
Draw near with pious rev'rence & attend;
Here lye the loving HUSBAND'S dear remains,
The tender FATHER, and the generous Friend.

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* This note here occurs in the original MS., and is also scored through: "Nanie is an excellent song, indeed capital—but the last stanza is shamefull, must[1] be published.—W. R."

[1] The erudite Mauchline critic evidently omits a *not* or *nat* here.—J. H.

† VAR.—O ye whose hearts deceased merit pains.

The pitying HEART, that felt for human woe,
  The dauntless HEART, that fear'd no human pride;
The friend of MAN, to vice alone a foe;
  For "even his failings lean'd to VIRTUE'S side." *

(Finis.)

April I think the whole species of young men may be naturally enough divided into two grand Classes, which I shall call the GRAVE, and the MERRY; tho' by the bye these terms do not with propriety enough express my ideas. There are indeed, some exceptions; some part of the species who, according to my ideas of these divisions, come under neither of them; such are those individuals whom Nature turns off her hand, oftentimes, very like BLOCKHEADS, but generally, on a nearer inspection, have something surprisingly clever about them. They are more properly men of Conceit than men of Genius; men whose heads are filled, and whose faculties are engrossed by some whimsical notions in some art, or science; so that they cannot think, nor speak with pleasure, on any other subject.—Besides this pedantic species, Nature has always produced some meer, insipid blockeads, who may be said to live a vegetable life, in this world.†

The GRAVE, I shall cast into the usual division of those who are goaded on; by the love of money; and those whose darling wish, is, to make a figure in the world.—The MERRY, are the men of Pleasure, of all denominations; the jovial lads who have too much fire & spirit to have any settled rule of action; but without much deliberation, follow the strong impulses

* This note is here inserted in the original MS. "Your Father's and Mr. Muir's is worth publishing of the foregoing Epitaphs, but I think you had better suppress the rest.—W. R."

† On this and the next paragraph an anonymous critic inserts the unnecessary remark:—"This is the labor of an inexperienced moralist."

of nature: the thoughtless; the careless; the indolent; and in particular He, who, with a happy sweetness of natural temper, and a cheerful vacancy of thought, steals through life, generally indeed, in poverty & obscurity; but poverty & obscurity are only evils to him, who can sit gravely down, and make a repining comparison between his own situation and that of others; and lastly to grace the quorum, such are, generally, the men whose heads are capable of all the towering of Genius, and whose hearts are warmed with the delicacy of Feeling.

Aug: The foregoing was to have been an elaborate dissertation on the various species of men; but as I cannot please myself in the arrangement of my ideas on the subject, I must wait till farther experience, & nicer observations throw more light on the subject.—In the mean time I shall set down the following fragment which, as it is the genuine language of my heart, will enable any body to determine which of the Classes I belong to.

Green grow the rashes—O
Green grow the rashes—O
The sweetest hour that e'er I spend
Are spent among the lasses—O

There's nought but care on ev'ry hand
In every hour that passes—O
What signifies the life o' man
An' 'twere na for the lasses—O
Green grow &c.

The warly race may riches chase
An' riches still may fly them—O
An' tho at last they catch them fast
There hearts can ne'er enjoy them—O
Green grow &c.

But gie me a canna hour at e'en
  My arms about my dearie—O
An' warly cares and warly men
  May a' goe tapsalteerie—O
                Green grow &c.

For you that's douse an' sneers at this
  Ye're nought but senseless asses—O
The wisest man the warl' saw
  He dearly lov'd the lasses—O *
                Green grow &c.

As the grand end of human life is to cultivate an intercourse with that BEING, to whom we owe life, with ev'ry enjoyment that renders life delightful; and to maintain an integritive conduct towards our fellow creatures; that so by forming PIETY & VIRTUE into habit, we may be fit members for that society of the Pious, and the Good, which reason and revelation teach us to expect beyond the grave—I do not see, that the turn of mind, and pursuits of such a one as the above verses describe—one who spends the hours & thoughts which the vocations of the day can spare with Ossian, Shakespeare, Thomson, Shenstone, Sterne &c. or as the maggot takes him, a gun, a fiddle, or a Song to make, or mend; and at all times some hearts-dear bony lass in view—I say I do not see that the turn of mind & pursuits of such a one are in the least more inimical to the sacred interests of Piety & Virtue, than the, even lawful, bustling, & straining after the world's riches & honors: and I do not see but he may gain Heaven as well, which by the bye, is no mean consideration, who steals thro the Vale of Life, amusing himself with every little flower that

* Here occurs the following note in the original MS.: "This fragment well deserves a place in your collection.—W. R."

fortune throws in his way; as he, who straining strait forward, perhaps spattering all about him, gains some of Life's little eminences, where, after all, he can only see & be seen a little more conspicuously, than, what in the pride of his heart, he is apt to term, the poor, indolent, devil he has left behind him.

Aug: A prayer, when fainting fits, & other alarming symptoms of a Pleurisy or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threaten me, first put Nature on the alarm.—

O Thou, Unknown, Almighty Cause
  Of all my hope & fear,
In whose dread presence ere an hour
  Perhaps I must appear.

If I have wander'd in those paths
  Of life I ought to shun,
As something loudly in my breast
  Remonstrates I have done.

Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me
  With passions wild & strong;
And listening to their witching voice
  Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
  Or FRAILTY stept aside;
Do Thou, All-Good, for such Thou art,
  In shades of darkness hide,

Where with INTENTION I have err'd,
  No other plea I have
But Thou art good, & goodness still
  Delighteth to forgive.*

* Here the following remark is inserted in the MS.—"this Would Look not amiss in my opinion.—W. R."

Aug: Misgivings in the hour of DESPONDENCY and—
prospect of DEATH.*

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene,
  Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between,
  Some gleams of sunshine 'midst renewing storms;
  Is it departing pangs my heart alarms,
Or Death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
  For guilt,—for guilt my terrors are in arms,
I tremble to approach an angry God
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say forgive my foul offence,
  Forgive where I so oft have gone astray;
But should my Author health again dispence
  Again I would desert fair Virtue's way;
  Again to passions I would fall a prey,
Again exalt the brute & sink the man,
  Then how can I for heavenly mercy pray
Who act so counter Heavenly mercy's plan,
Who sin so oft have mourn'd then to temptation ran.

O Thou great Governor of all below!
  If one so black with crimes dare call on Thee;
Thy breath can make the tempest cease to blow,
  And still the tumult of the raging Sea:
  With that controuling Power assist even me
Those headlong, furious passions to confine,
  For all unfit my native powers be
To rule their torrent in th' allowed line:
O aid me with thy help, Omnipotence Divine!†

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* "W. R." inserts a brief note thus, in reference to this poem, "too serious. —W. R."

† This closing stanza had been omitted by the poet, and inserted a little farther on, with a note referring to the omission.

Sept. —— SONG.—(*Tune.* "Invercald's reel—Strathspey.")

Chorus—Tibby I hae seen the day
Ye wadna been sae shy
An' for laik o' gear ye lightly me
But fien' a hair care I

Yestreen I met you on the moor
Ye spak' na but gaed by like stoor
Ye lightly me because I'm poor
But fien' a hair care I.

When comin' hame on Sunday last
Upon the road as I cam' past
Ye snufft an' gae your head a cast
But trouth I caretna by.

I doubt na lass, but ye may think
Because ye hae the name o' clink
That ye can please me at a wink
Whene'er ye like to try

But sorrow tak' him that's sae mean
Altho' his pouch o' coin were clean
That follows ony saucy Quean
That looks sae proud & high

Altho' a lad were e'er sae smart
If that he want the yellow dirt
Ye'll cast your head anither airt
An' answer him fu' dry

But if he hae the name o' gear
Ye'll fasten till him like a breer
Tho' hardly he for sense or lear
Be better than the ky

But Tibby lass tak' my advice
Your father's gear mak's you sae nice
The de'il a ane wad speir your price
  Were ye as poor as I

There lives a lass beside yon park
I'd rather hae her in her sark
Than you wi' a' your thousand mark
  That gars you look sae high

An' Tibby I hae seen the day
  Ye wadna been sae shy
An' for laik o' gear ye lightly me
  But fien' a hair care I.*

Sept. —— SONG.—(*Tune* "Black Joke.")

My girl she's airy, she's buxom and gay;
Her breath is as sweet as the blossoms in May;
  A touch of her lips it ravishes quite.
She's always good natur'd, good humor'd & free;
She dances, she glances, she smiles upon me
  I never am happy when out of her sight.
Her slender neck her handsome waist
Her hair well curl'd her stays well lac'd
Her taper white leg with
For her †
  And O for the joys of a long winter night.‡

John Barleycorn—A Song, to its own Tune.

I once heard the old song, that goes by this name, sung; & being very fond of it, & remembering only

* The following note here occurs in the original: "I will not Dispense with this, it is so Excellent. Change the name of Tibbie to some other if it will nat do.—W. R."

† This portion is inserted in hieroglyphics which our printer has no types to represent.

‡ The sapient "W. R." here writes under the original MS.: "This will not do.—W. R.;" and a third hand adds, "No; you are right, W. R."

two or three verses of it viz. the 1st, 2d and 3d, with some scraps which I have interwoven here & there in the following piece.—*

1785 June

1

There was three kings into the east,
  Three kings both great & high;
And they have sworn a solemn oath
  That John Barleycorn should die.

2.

They've ta'en a plough & plough'd him down,
  Put clods upon his head,
And they have sworn a solemn oath
  That John Barleycorn was dead.

3.

But the spring time it came on,
  And showers began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again
  And sore surpriz'd them all.

4.

The summer it came on,
  And he grew thick & strong;
His head well arm'd with pointed spears
  That not one should him wrong.

5.

The Autumn it came on,
  And he grew wan & pale;
His bending joints & drooping head
  Show'd he began to fail.

* The reader may notice that the Bard does not complete his sentence here. It is also proper to note that no entries are inserted in the Book betwixt Sept. 1784 and June 1785—a circumstance which tempted Cromek, in his version of this Journal, to introduce some foreign matter here, dated "May," apparently belonging to 1786.

6.

His color sickened more & more,
  He faded into age,
And then his enemies began
  To show their deadly rage.

7.

They took a hook was long & sharp
  And cut him down at knee;
They ty'd him fast upon a cart
  Like a rogue for forgery.

8.

They laid him down upon his back
  And cudgel'd him full sore;
They hung him up before the storm
  And turned him o'er & o'er.

9.

They filled up a darksome pit
  With water to the brim,
They've heaved in John Barleycorn
  There let him sink or swim.

10.

They've thrown him out upon the floor
  To work him farther woe;
And still as signs of life appear'd
  They toss'd him to & fro.

11.

They wasted o'er a scorching flame
  The marrow of his bones;
But the Miller us'd him worst of all
  For he crush'd him between two stones.

12.

And they have ta'en his very heart's blood
  And drank it round & round;
And still the more & more they drank
  Their joy did more abound.

13.

John Barleycorn was a Hero bold
  Of noble enterprize,
For if you do but taste his blood
  'Twill make your courage rise.

14.

'Twill make a man forget his woe,
  And heighten all his joy;
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing
  Tho the tear were in her eye.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn
  Each man a glass in hand,
And may his great posterity
  Ne'er fail in old Scotland.*

Finis.

June. { The death & dyin' words o' poor Mailie—my ain pet ewe—an unco mournfu' Tale.

As Mailie & her lambs the gither
Were ae day nibblin' on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch
And o'er she warsl'd in the ditch.
There groanin', dyin' she did lye
When Hughoc he cam' doitin' bye.
Wi' glowerin' een & lifted hands

* Here is inserted under the original, the following criticism:—"I dont like the above, but perhaps I am wrong.—W. R."

Poor Hughoc like a statue stands;
He saw her days were near hand ended,
But waes my heart, he couldna mend it;
He gapit wide, but naething spak;
At length poor Mailie silence brak—

O Thou whas lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case,
My dyin' words attentive hear
And bear them to my Master dear:
Tell him if e'er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a sheep;
O bid him never tye them mair
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair;
But caw them out to park or hill
And let them wander at their will,
So may his flock increase & grow
To scores o' lambs & packs of woo'.

Tell him he was a master kind
And ay was gude to me & mine;
And now my dyin' charge I gi'e him
My helpless lambs I trust them wi' him.
O bid him save their harmless lives
Frae dogs & tods & butchers knives;
But gie them gude het milk their fill
Till they be fit to fen' themsel:
And tent them duely e'en & morn
Wi' tates o' hay & ripps o' corn.
O may they never learn the gaits
Of ither vile unrestfu' pets,
To slink thro slaps, & reave & steal
At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail:
So may they like their auld forbears
For mony a year come thro the shears
So wives 'll gie them bits o' bread
And bairns greet for them when they're dead.

My poor toop lamb, my sinn & heir,
O bid him breed him up wi' care;
And if he live to be a beast
To put some havins in his breast.
And warn him ay at ridin' time
To stay content wi' ewes at hame,
And no to rin & wear his cloots
Like ither menseless, graceless brutes;——

And neist my ewie, silly thing,
Gude keep thee frae a tether string.
O may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' ony blastit moorlan' tipp;
But ay keep mind to moop & mell
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel.
And now my bairns, wi' my last breath
I li'e my blessin' wi' you baith:
And when ye ever mind your mither
Mind to be kind to ane anither.

Now honest Hughoc, dinna fail
To tell my master a' my tale;
And bid him burn this cursed tether,
And for thy pains thou's get my blether.

This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head
And clos'd her een amang the dead.*

Finis.

June. { A letter sent to John Lapraik, near Muirkirk, a true, genuine, Scotish Bard.

April 1st 1785

While breers & woodbines buding green
And paitricks scraichin' loud at e'en

* Here is inserted the following note :—" Maily must appear.—W. R."

And mornin' poosie whiddin' seen
Inspire my muse
This freedom in an unknown frien'
I pray excuse.

On Fasten-e'en we had a rockin,
To ca' the crack & weave our stockin'
And there was meikle fun & jokin'
Ye need na doubt
At length we had a hearty yokin'
At sang about.

There was ae sang amang the rest
Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife
It touch'd the feelings o' the breast
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought I pleas'd sae weel
The style sae tastie & genteel
Thought I can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beatties wark
They tald me 'twas an odd kind chiel
About Muirkirk.

My heart was fidgin' fain to hear't
And sae about him a' I speirt
Then a' that kent him round declar't
He was a devil
But had a frank & friendly heart
Discreet & civil.

That set him to a pint of ale
And either douse or merry tale

Or rhymes & sangs he'd made himsel
Or witty catches
'Tween Inverness & Tiviotdale
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, & swoor an aith
Tho I should pawn my pleugh & graith
Or die a cadger pownie's death
At some dyke back
A pint & gill I'd gie them baith
To hear your crack.

But first & foremost I should tell
Amaist since ever I could spell
I've dealt in makin' rhymes mysel
Tho' rude & rough
But croonin' at a pleugh or flail
Do weel enough

I am na Poet in a sense
But just a Rhymer like by chance
And hae to learnin' nae pretence
Yet what the matter
Whene'er my Muse does on me glance
I jingle at her.

Your Critic folk may cock their nose
And say how can you e'er propose
You wha ken hardly verse by prose
To mak' a sang
But by your leaves my learned foes
Ye're maybe wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' the schools
Your latin names for horns & stools

If honest nature made you fools
What sairs your grammars
Ye'd better ta'en up spades & shools
Or knappin' hammers.

A set of silly senseless asses
Confuse their brains in Colledge classes
They gang in stirks & come out asses
Thus sae to speak
And then they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek.

Gi'e me ae spark o' nature's fire
That's a' the learnin' I desire
Then tho I drudge thro dub & mire
At pleugh or cart
My Muse tho hamely in attire
May touch the heart.

O for a spunk o' Allan's glee
Or Ferguson the bauld & slee
Or tight Lapraik my friend to be
If I can hit it
That would be lear enough for me
If I could get it.

Now, Sir, if ye hae frien's enow
Tho real frien's I b'lieve are few
Yet if your catalogue be fou
I'll no insist
But if ye want ae friend that's true
I'm on your list.

I winna blaw about mysel
As ill I like my fauts to tell

But friends & folk that wish me well
They some times roose me
Though I maun own as mony still
As far abuse me.

There's ae wee faut they whiles lay to me.
I like the lasses Gûde forgie me
For mony a plack they wheedle fae me
At dance or fair
May be some ither thing they gie me
They weel can spare.

At Mauchline race or Mauchline fair
I should be proud to meet you there
We'll gie ae night's discharge to care
If we foregather
And hae a swap o' rhyming ware
Wi' ane anither.

The fourgill chap we'll gar him clatter
And kirsen him wi' reekin' water
Syne we'se sit down & take our whitter
To cheer our heart
And faith we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

Awa ye selfish warldly race
Wha think that havins sense & grace
Even Love & Friendship should give place
To Catch-the-plack
I dinna like to see your face
Nor hear your crack

But ye whom social pleasure charms
Whose hearts true generous friendship warms

Who hold your beings on the terms
'Each aid the Others'
Come to my bowl—come to my arms
My friends my brothers

But to conclude my lang epistle
As my auld pen's worn to the gristle
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fistle
Who am most fervent
While I can either sing or whistle
Your Friend & Servant.

Sic subscribitur ——— ———*

On receiving an answer to the above I wrote the following

April 21st 1785

While new ca't ky rowt at the stake
And pownies reek at pleugh or brake
This hour on e'enin's edge I take
To own I'm debtor
To honest hearted auld LAPRAIK
For his kind letter

Forjesket sair wi' weary legs
Rattlin' the corn out owre the rigs
Or dealin' thro' amang the naigs
Their ten hours bite
My dowie muse sair pleads & begs
I would na write.

The tapietless ramfeezl'd hissie
She's saft at best & something lazy

* Ronald here wisely says :—"The Above is Exceeding pretty.—W. R."

Quo' she ye ken I've been sae bissie
This month & mair
That trouth my head is grown right dissie
And something sair.

Her dowf excuses pat me mad
Conscience says I ye thowless jad'
I'll write and that a hearty blaud
This vera night
Sae dinna ye affront your trade
But rhyme it right

Shall bauld Lapraik the Ace o' hearts
Tho mankind were a pack o' cartes
Roose you sae weel for your deserts
In terms sae friendly
Yet ye'll neglect to shaw your parts
And thank him kindly.*

Sae I got paper in a blink
And in went stumpie in the ink
Says I before I sleep a wink
I vow I'll close it
And if ye winna make it clink
By Jove I'll prose it.

But what my theme's to be, or whether
In rhyme or prose or baith the gither
Or some hotchpotch that's rightly neither
Let time mak' proof
But I shall scribble down some blether
Just clean aff loof.

My worthy friend ne'er grudge & carp
Tho fortune use you hard & sharp

* In the MS. the author had misplaced this verse by making it follow the words "Just clean aff loof," but in a note he points out this as its proper place.

Come kittle up your moorland harp
Wi' gleesome touch
Ne'er mind how Fortune waft & warp
She's but a b——.

She's gien me mony a jirt & fleg
Sin' I could striddle o'er a rig
But by the l—d tho I should beg
Wi' lyart pow
I'll laugh, & sing, & shake my leg
As lang's I dow.

Do ye envy the city Gent
Behint a kist to lie & sklent
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent per cent
And muckle wame
In some bit Burgh to represent
A Bailie's name.

Or is't the lordly feudal Thane
Wi' ruffled sark & glancin' cane
Wha thinks himsel nae sheepshank bane
But lordly stalks
While caps and bonnets aff are ta'en
As by he walks.

May He wha gives us each good gift
Gie me o' wit & sense a lift
Then tho' he turn me out adrift
Thro Scotland wide
Wi' cits & lairds I wad na shift
In a' their pride.

Were this the charter of our state
"On pain of Hell be rich & great"

Damnation then would be our fate
Beyond remead
But thanks to Heaven, that's no the gate
We learn our creed.

For thus the royal mandate ran
Since first the HUMAN-RACE began
"The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be,
Tis he fulfils Great Nature's plan,
And none but He."

O mandate, glorious & divine!
The followers o' the ragged Nine,
Poor honest devils, yet may shine
In glorious light,
While sordid sons o' MAMON'S line
Are dark as night.

Tho' here, they grunt, & scrape & growl,
Their silly nivefow o' a soul
May in some future carcase howl,
The forest's fright;
Or in a day-detesting owl
May shun the light.

LAPRAIK, & BURNESS then may rise
And reach their native, kindred skies;
And sing their pleasures hopes & joys
In some mild sphere
Still closer knit in Friendship's ties
Each passing year.*

* Here Mr. Ronald adds the following note:—"I think there is some faults in the above which might be easily ameuded, but the last part of it flags unpardonably,—the first is fraught with genuine humor.—W. R."

August. A SONG—(*Tune*, Peggy Bawn.)

When chill November's surly blast
  Made fields & forests bare,
One evening as I wandered forth
  Along the banks of Ayr;
I spi'd a man whose aged step
  Seem'd weary worn with care
His face was furrow'd o'er with years
  And hoary was his hair.

"Young Stranger whither wanderest thou,"
  Began the rev'rend Sage;
Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
  Or youthful pleasure's rage;
Or hap'ly prest by cares and woes
  Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth with me to mourn
  The miseries of MAN.

Yon sun that hangs o'er Carrick Moors
  That spread so far and wide;
Where hundreds labor to support
  The lordly Cassilis pride:*
I've seen yon weary winter sun
  Twice forty times return.
And every time has added proofs
  That man was made to mourn.

O man! while in thy early years
  How prodigal of time;
Mispending all those precious hours
  Thy glorious youthful prime:

* A note in the MS. by "W. R." remarks as follows:—"*The Lordly Cassilis' pride* is a line you must alter. I was astonished to see anything so personal.—W. R."

Alternate follies take the sway,
  Licentious passions burn,
Which tenfold force give Nature's law
  That, man was made to mourn.

Look not alone on youthful prime,
  Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
  Supported is his right:
But see him "on the edge of days"
  With cares and labors worn,
Then Age and Want—O ill matched Pair!
  Show man was made to mourn.*

A few seem favorites of Fate
  In Fortune's lap carest;
Yet think not all the rich and great
  Are likewise truly blest;
But O what crowds in ev'ry land
  To wants & sorrows born,
Thro weary life this lesson learn
  That man was made to mourn!

Many the ills that Nature's hand
  Has woven with our frame;
More pointed still we make ourselves
  Regret, remorse, & shame:
And Man, whose heaven-erected face
  The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
  Makes countless thousands mourn.

See yonder poor o'erlabor'd wight
  So abject, mean & vile,

* The poet had misplaced this verse in transcribing, but points out in a note that this is its proper position.

Who begs a brother of the earth
  To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow worm
  The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful tho a weeping wife,
  And helpless children mourn.

If I am doom'd yon Lordling's slave,
  By Nature's hand design'd,
Why was an independent wish
  E'er planted in my mind;
If not, why am I subject to
  His cruelty or scorn,
Or why has man the will & power
  To make his fellow mourn.

Yet let not this too much, my Son,
  Disturb thy youthful breast;
This partial view of HUMANKIND
  Is surely not the last;
The poor, oppressed, honest heart
  Had surely ne'er been born
Had there not been some recompence
  To comfort those that mourn.

O Death! the poor man's dearest friend,
  The kindest & the best!
Welcome the hour my aged limbs
  Are laid with thee at rest!
The Great, the Wealthy fear thy blow
  From pomps, & pleasures torn;
But oh! a blest relief for those
  That, weary-laden, MOURN.

Aug.—However I am pleased with the works of our Scotch Poets, particularly the excellent Ramsay, and

the still more excellent Ferguson, yet I am hurt to see other places of Scotland, their towns, rivers, woods, haughs, &c. immortalized in such celebrated performances, whilst my dear native country, the ancient Bailieries of Carrick, Kyle, & Cunningham, famous both in ancient & modern times for a gallant, and warlike race of inhabitants; a country where civil, & particularly religious Liberty have ever found their first support, & their last asylum; a country, the birthplace of many famous Philosophers, Soldiers, & Statesmen, and the scene of many important events recorded in Scottish History, particularly a great many of the actions of the GLORIOUS WALLACE, the SAVIOUR of his country; yet, we have never had one Scotch Poet of any eminence, to make the fertile banks of Irvine, the romantic woodlands & sequestered scenes on Aire, and the healthy, mountainous source, & winding sweep of Doon emulate Tay, Forth, Ettrick, Tweed, &c. This is a complaint I would gladly remedy, but Alas! I am far unequal to the task, both in native genius & education.

Obscure I am, & obscure I must be, though no young Poet, nor Young Soldier's heart ever beat more fondly for fame than mine.

And if there is no other scene of Being
Where my insatiate wish may have its fill;
This something at my heart that heaves for room,
My best, my dearest part was made in vain.*

Aug: A Fragment. *Tune* I had a horse & I had nae mair.

When first I came to Stewart Kyle
My mind it was nae steady,

* Here a note, in an unknown hand, inserts:—"The above may furnish remark on the Bard."

Where e'er I gaed, where e'er I rade,
  A Mistress still I had ay:
But when I came roun' by Mauchlin town,
  Not dreadin' any body,
My heart was caught before I thought
  And by a MAUCHLINE LADY.

Har'ste.—A Fragment. *Tune* Foregoing

Now breezy win's and slaughtering guns
  Bring Autumn's pleasant weather,
And the muir cock springs on whirring wings
  Amang the blooming heather.
Now waving crops, with yellow tops,
  Delight the weary Farmer,
An' the Moon shines bright when I rove at night,
  To muse on*

Sept.† There is a certain irregularity in the old Scotch Songs, a redundancy of syllables with respect to that exactness of Accent & measure that the English Poetry requires, but which glides in, most melodiously with the respective tunes to which they are set. For instance, the fine old Song of The Mill Mill O, to give it a plain prosaic reading it halts prodigiously out of measure; on the other hand, the Song set to the same tune in Bremner's collection of Scotch Songs which begins "To Fanny fair could I impart &c." it is most exact measure, and yet, let them be both sung before a real Critic, one above the biasses of prejudice, but a thorough Judge of Nature, —how flat & spiritless will the last appear, how trite,

* The two closing words are in cypher, meaning "Jeanie Armour."

† This passage is headed by a note, apparently in Mr. Syme's hand, thus: "The following remarks may be introduced somewhere, when Thomson's letters are noticed."

and lamely methodical, compared with the wild-warbling cadence, the heart-moving melody of the first.—This particularly is the case with all those airs which end with a hypermetrical syllable.—There is a degree of wild irregularity in many of the compositions & Fragments which are daily sung to them by my compeers, the common people—a certain happy arrangement of old Scotch syllables, & yet, very frequently, nothing, not even *like* rhyme, or sameness of jingle at the ends of the lines. This has made me sometimes imagine that perhaps, it might be possible for a Scotch Poet, with a nice, judicious ear, to set compositions to many of our most favorite airs, particularly that class of them mentioned above, independent of rhyme altogether.

There is a noble Sublimity, a heart-melting tenderness in some of these ancient fragments, which show them to be the work of a masterly hand; and it has often given me many a heartake to reflect that such glorious old Bards—Bards, who, very probably, owed all their talents to native genius, yet have described the exploits of Heroes, the pangs of Disappointment, and the meltings of Love with such fine strokes of Nature, and, O mortifying to a Bard's vanity their very names are "buried 'mongst the wreck of things which were."

O ye illustrious Names unknown! who could feel so strongly and describe so well! the last, the meanest of the MUSES TRAIN—one who, though far inferiour to your flights, yet eyes your path, and with trembling wing would sometimes soar after you—a poor, rustic BARD UNKNOWN, pays this sympathetic pang to your memory! Some of you tell us, with all the charms of Verse, that you have been unfortunate in the world—unfortunate in love; he too, has felt all the unfitness of a poetic heart for the struggle of a

busy, bad World; he has felt the loss of his little fortune, the loss of friends, and worse than all, the loss of the Woman he adored! Like you, all his consolation was his Muse—She taught him in rustic measures to complain—Happy, could he have done it with your strength of imagination, and flow of Verse! May the turf rest lightly on your bones! And may you now enjoy that solace and rest which this world rarely gives to the heart tuned to all the feelings of Poesy and love! *

X Sept.—The following fragment is done, something in imitation of the manner of a noble old Scottish Piece called M'Millan's Peggy, and sings to the tune of Galla water.†—My Montgomeries Peggy was my Deity for six, or eight months. She had been bred, tho' as the world says, without any just pretence for it, in a style of life rather elegant.—But as Vanburgh says in one of his comedies, my "dam'd Star Found me out" there too, for though I began the affair, merely in a gaité de cœur, or to tell the truth, what would scarcely be believed, a vanity of showing my parts in Courtship, particularly my abilities at a Billet doux, which I always piqu'd myself upon, made me lay siege to her; and when, as I always do in my foolish gallantries, I had battered myself into a very warm affection for her, she told me, one day in a flag of truce, that her fortress had been for some time before the rightful property of another; but with the greatest friendship and politeness, she offered me every alliance, except actual possession.—I found out afterwards, that what she told me of a preengagement was really true; but it cost some heart Achs to get rid of the affair.—

* Mr. Syme here suggests to Dr. Currie:—"Perhaps the above would take with many readers."

† Mr. Syme here puts in a note:—"This explains the love-letters to Begbie,"—meaning the four letters to "My dear E.," printed by Currie.

I have even tried to imitate in this extempore thing, that irregularity in the rhyme which when judiciously done, has such a fine effect on the ear.

FRAGMENT. *Tune,* GALLA WATER.

Altho' my bed were in yon muir,
Amang the heather, in my plaidie,
Yet happy happy would I be
Had I my dear Montgomerie's Peggy.

When o'er the hill beat surly storms,
And winter nights were dark and rainy;
I'd seek some dell, and in my arms
I'd shelter dear Montgomerie's Peggy.

Were I a Baron proud and high,
And horse and servants waiting ready,
Then a' 'twad gie o' joy to me,
The sharin't with Montgomerie's Peggy.*

Sept.—Another Fragment in imitation of an old Scotch Song, well known among the Country ingle sides—I cannot tell the name, neither of the Song nor the Tune, but they are in fine Unison with one another.—By the way, these old Scottish airs are so nobly sentimental that when one would compose to them; to *south* the tune, as our Scotch phrase is, over & over, is the readiest way to catch the inspiration and raise the Bard into that glorious enthusiasm so strongly characteristic of our old Scotch Poetry.—I shall here set down one verse of the piece mentioned above, both to mark the Song & tune I mean, and likewise as a debt I owe to the Author, as the

* Mr. Syme here notes "Indifferent, & G. B. says it is a parody on an old Scotch Song."

repeating of that verse has lighted up my flame a thousand times.

Alluding to the misfortunes he feelingly laments before this verse

> "When clouds in skies do come together
> To hide the brightness of the sun,
> There will surely be some pleasant weather
> When a' thir storms are past and gone."

Though fickle Fortune has deceiv'd me,
She promis'd fair and perform'd but ill;
Of Mistress, friends, and wealth bereav'd me,
Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.

I'll act with prudence as lang's I'm able
But if success I must never find,
Then come Misfortune, I bid thee welcome,
I'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.

The above was an extempore under the pressure of a heavy train of Misfortunes, which, indeed, threatened to undo me altogether.—It was just at the close of that dreadful period mentioned Page 8th; and though the weather has brightened up a little with me, yet there has always been since, a "tempest brewing round me in the grim sky" of futurity, which I pretty plainly see will, some time or other, perhaps ere long overwhelm me, and drive me into some doleful dell to pine in solitary, squallid wretchedness. However as I hope my poor, country Muse, who, all rustic, akward, and unpolished as she is, has more charms for me than any other of the pleasures of life beside—as I hope she will not then desert me, I may, even then, learn to be, if not happy, at least easy, and south a sang to sooth my misery.

'Twas at the same time I set about composing an air in the old Scotch style.—I am not Musical Scholar

enough to prick down my tune properly, so it can never see the light, and perhaps 'tis no great matter, but the following were the verses I composed to suit it.

O raging Fortune's withering blast
  Has laid my leaf full low! O
O raging Fortune's withering blast
  Has laid my leaf full low! O

My stem was fair my bud was green
  My blossom sweet did blow; O
The dew fell fresh, the sun rose mild,
  And made my branches grow; O

But luckless Fortune's northern storms
  Laid a' my blossoms low.—O
But luckless Fortunes northern storms
  Laid a' my blossoms low.—O

The tune consisted of three parts, so that the above verses just went through the whole Air.

Oct. 85.—If ever any young man, on the vestibule of the world, chance to throw his eye over these pages, let him pay a warm attention to the following observations; as I assure him they are the fruit of a poor devil's dear bought Experience.—I have, literaly like that great Poet and great Gallant, and by consequence, that great Fool, Solomon,—"turned my eyes to behold Madness and Folly"—Nay I have, with all the ardor of a lively, fanciful and whimsical imagination, accompanied with a warm, feeling, Poetic heart —shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship.

In the first place, let my Pupil, as he tenders his own peace, keep up a regular, warm intercourse with the Deity, ...

SECOND COMMON-PLACE BOOK.

IMMEDIATELY preceding we have given an entire copy of our bard's earliest Common-place Book, begun in April, 1783, and closed in October, 1785. Near the end of the latter year the poet procured a similar blank-paper version book, containing twenty sheets or eighty folio pages in all; into which he transcribed, in fair hand, fifteen of his principal poetical compositions, namely:—

The Holy Fair, ...	pages 1 to 6
Hallowe'en, ...	7 ,, 15
Address to the Deil, ...	16 ,, 19
The Auld Farmer's Address to his Mare, . .	20 ,, 22
John Barleycorn, a Ballad, ...	23 ,, 25
Scotch Drink, ...	26 ,, 29
Man was made to Mourn, ...	29 ,, 32
The Twa Dogs: a Tale, ...	32 ,, 39
The Cotter's Saturday at E'en, . . .	40 ,, 46
The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer, . .	46 ,, 51
Address to James Smith, ...	52 ,, 56
Winter, a Dirge, ...	56 ,, 57
Epistle to Davy, a Brother Poet, . . .	57 ,, 61
The Death of Poor Mailie, ...	62 ,, 63
Poor Mailie's Elegy, ...	64 ,, 65

The remaining fifteen pages are blank, except that on page 80 are two amended stanzas of the Address to James Smith. There are indications which suggest that the last entries in the book were made shortly after the rupture between the author and the Armour family, about the month of March, 1786. The numerous deletings and alterations in the Address to James Smith and in poor Mailie's Elegy lead to the inference that these pieces were then freshly composed; while the others, from their cleaner penmanship, must have been transcribed from pre-existing manuscripts. The re-modelling of one of the stanzas in the Address to the Deil shows that, in view of sending his poems to the press, he desired to extin-

guish a fine compliment to Jean Armour contained in the original version.

The interesting Collection of autograph poems, we are now referring to, was acquired by George Wilson, Esq., Murrayfield House, Edinburgh, in the latter part of 1876. The document had been placed in Dr. Currie's hands along with the other materials from which he compiled his edition of the Life and Works of Burns, and it remained a family inheritance, during a long series of years, in possession of the biographer's descendants. Eventually, along with the early Common-place Book, which was purchased by the late John Adam, of Greenock, it was sold by auction in London; and after passing through various hands, it is our good fortune now to have the opportunity of describing it before closing the present Work.

The bringing of this manuscript to light settles the date of composition of "The Holy Fair." Following Chambers, Lockhart and others who have expressed their views regarding the chronology of the more important poems that were published in 1786, we had supposed it to be among the latest of the pieces produced in that volume; but it must now be definitely fixed as a composition of August or September, 1785. The only other poem in the list to which the author has attached a date is the "Epistle to Davie," which is recorded as a production of "January 1785." The references to Jean in the four concluding stanzas are so inwoven with the fabric of the composition, that when the poet extracted from *The Vision* and the *Address to the Deil* the beautiful allusions to Jean, he must have found it a hopeless matter to attempt as much with the *Epistle to Davy*.

The MS. in question opens thus:—

"SCOTCH POEMS, BY ROB^T. BURNESS.

HOLY FAIR.

Composed in Autumn 1785."

THE motto of eight lines pretended to be quoted from a poem called "Hypocrisy a la mode" is wanting; and it is remarkable that the peculiar mode of spelling the termination of verbs which prevails so much in the author's first edition is rarely countenanced in this MS. Instead of "glintan,"

"chantan," etc., we have *glentin* and *chantin*. When he came to print a second edition he entirely abandoned that approximation to the old Saxon method of terminating the participle present, so common in Dunbar and old Scotch poets, who used "gangand" for *gangin;* "springand" for *springin*, etc. The Edinburgh *literateurs* of 1787 have been blamed by some of our philological critics for poisoning the taste of Burns in such matters; but this manuscript proves that if he was misled at all, it must have been by his Kilmarnock printer, who was old-fashioned enough to print thus:—

> "A Cotter *howkan* in a sheugh
> Wi' dirty stanes *biggan* a dyke."

In verse ix. of "The Holy Fair," instead of the printed lines,

> "There, racer Jess an' twa-three wh-res
> Are blinkin at the entry,"

we have in the manuscript,

> "Bet Barb-r there, an' twa-three wh-res
> Sit blinkin at the entry."

In verse xii., the blanks left for *Moodie's* name are filled up with "Sawnie;" and in verse xiv. the blank in the line referring to Smith of Galston is filled up thus:—"Geordie begins his cauld harangues." In like manner, instead of—"For Peebles, frae the water-fit" in verse xvi., we have—"For fairy Willie Water-fit." At the end of verse xviii., the author inserts a note thus:—"The next verse after the following ought to be in here;" that is to say, he transposes the 19th and 20th stanzas, and the improvement is obvious.

But alas! in describing our MS., we have now to announce that it breaks off in the middle of verse xxix. in the *Holy Fair;* because three leaves of the book (from pp. 5 to 10 inclusive) have been torn out; and by consulting the earliest of the sale catalogues we find the breach is an old one. Thus we want the closing eight and a half verses of "The Holy Fair," and the opening sixteen verses and two lines of verse seventeen of "Halloween." In other respects, the book is quite complete.

So far as we can compare this MS. of "Halloween" with the printed copy, it differs only in one line of the closing verse. Instead of "And unco tales an' funny jokes," we read "And

mony funny tales and jokes." The author's notes occupy two closely written pages at the end of the poem; and these correspond in matter, although not in verbal structure, with the printed version.

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL, *page* 16.

THE motto from Milton is wanting. In verse *third*, instead of the line "An tho' yon lowan heugh's thy hame," we have "An' tho' yon howe het hole's thy hame." In verse *tenth* for "witching skill" we have "wicked (or cantraip) skill." Instead of the present verse *eleventh* we have in the original:—

"Thence knots are coosten, spells contriv'd,
An' the brisk bridegroom newly wived,
Just at the kittle point arriv'd,
Fond, keen, and crouse,
Is by some spitefu' jad depriv'd
O's warklume's use."

This is deleted in the MS., and at the end of the poem the published verse is given with some inconsiderable variation. In verse 12th, for "nighted travellers" we have "nightly travellers." The 15th verse in the original MS. reads thus:—

"Lang syne in Eden's happy scene,
When strappin Edie's days were green,
And Eve was like my bonie Jean,
My dearest part,
A dancin, sweet, young, handsome quean,
Wi' guileless heart."

That verse is deleted in the MS., and the fresh verse extended at the end of the poem. In verse 20th, instead of "A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin," we read "That Robin rantin, swearin, drinkin."

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS OLD MEERE,

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW-YEAR, *page* 20.

THERE is only a very trifling verbal difference observable on comparing the MS. with the printed copies, till we come to the very close of the poem, where we find,

"Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether,
An' clap thy back,
An' mind the days we've haen thegither,
An' ca' the crack."

JOHN BARLEYCORN, a Ballad, *page* 23.

"THERE is an old Scotch song known by that name whose first two verses begin the following; and the general idea of it runs through the whole." Verse 2nd "They've taen a plough," &c.; verse 3rd "The Spring time cam wi' kindly warmth;" verse 4th "The Summer cam wi' sultry heat," &c.; verse 5th "The Autumn cam wi' fresh'ning breeze," &c.

SCOTCH DRINK, *page* 26.

THE MS. corresponds precisely with the printed copy in the author's first edition, the words in italics excepted; and in verse 15, instead of "burnan trash," we have *burnin trash.*

A BALLAD, *page* 29.

"When chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning as I wander'd forth,
Along the banks of Aire," &c.

THIS version of "Man was made to mourn," is an improvement on the one we have printed from the First Common-place Book, at page 354, *supra*, and excepting in the title it nearly corresponds with the copy in the author's first edition. Verse 3, however, stands as in the earlier MS.

"Yon sun that hangs o'er Carrick moors,
That spread so far and wide,
Where hundreds labor to support
The lordly Cassilis' pride," &c.

In verse 5, instead of "cares and sorrows," we read *cares and labours;* and in verse 9, for "Nature's law" we have *Nature's hand;* also "will or power," instead of *will and power.*

THE TWA DOGS: A TALE, *page* 32.

THIS corresponds so closely with the copy in the Kilmarnock edition that one might suppose that "wee Johnie" must have printed from it, did we not know that the *printer's copy* thereof is now possessed by the Irvine Burns Club. Our MS. however wants an important couplet which the printed copy puts into the mouth of Luath, near the middle of the poem, where he says of the Cotters that, when under the influence of "twalpennyworth o' nappy,"

> "They lay aside their private cares,
> To mind the Kirk and State affairs;
> They talk o' patronage and priests,
> Wi' kindling fury i' their breasts;
> Or tell what new taxation's comin,
> An' ferlie at the folk in Lon'on."

The wanting couplet is the centre one of this quotation, which must have been interpolated by the author in preparing the poem for the press. In our MS. the reading is as follows:—

> "An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy
> Can mak the bodies unco happy;
> They lay aside their private cares
> An' mind the Kirk and State affairs,
> Foretell what new taxation's comin,
> An' wonder at the folk in Lon'on."

We may add that in the MS. the poem is not broken up into so many paragraphs as in the printed copy; and instead of such Kilmarnock terminations as "howkan, biggan, rantan, ramblan, luntan," &c., these verbs are spelled as in the Edinburgh edition. We note also that instead of "thrum guittars," the MS. has "play guittarrs;" and in the closing line, "Resolv'd to meet some ither day," the MS. reads "meet another day."

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY 'T E'EN, *page* 40.

INSCRIBED TO MR. ROBERT AITKEN, AYR.

ON a separate page, apart from the poem, in the manner of a "bastard title," the author has inscribed the motto from Gray's Elegy, headed by the finally adopted title,

"THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT."

The MS. is very perfect, and shows not a single deletion, which is more than can be said of the printer's copy possessed by the Irvine Burns Club. The following are the only variations from the published version that we have observed:—verse 2, for "trains o' craws" we have *flocks o' craws;* verse 3, for "toddlen," we have *toitlen*, a very expressive word; verse 5, we have *and* instead of "or" in the line, "Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;" and in the same verse we have *Maks* instead of "Gars." In verse 8, for "strappan youth," we have *strappin youth;* and for "artless heart" we have *witless heart.* In verse 9, the opening line is "O happy love! where suchen love is found," instead of "where love like this is found;" and in same verse we have "I've pacèd long this weary mortal round," for "I've pacèd much." In verse 10 we read "Virtue, Conscience, Honor, all exil'd," instead of "Honor, Virtue, Conscience."

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER TO THE RT. HONBLE. AND HONBLE. THE SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, *page* 46.

THE variations from the Kilmarnock text are very trifling. In verse 2, for "roupet," and "scriechan," we have *roopit*, and *scriechin*. In verse 7, for "greetan, seizan, and crushan't," we have *greetin*, *seizin*, and *crushin't*. The 15th verse is as follows, but deleted by the author, who has written on the margin, "This verse expunge."

> "Thee, sodger Hugh, my watchman stented,
> If Bardies e'er are represented;
> I ken if that your sword were wanted,
> Ye'd lend your hand;
> But when there's aught to *say* anent it,
> Ye're at a stand."

In the 16th verse, instead of the printed words,

> "Arouse my boys! exert your mettle
> To get auld Scotland back her Kettle,"

we have in the MS.

> "Rouse up, my boys! exert your mettle
> To get your Mither back her Kittle,"

The words "your Mither" are deleted, and "auld Scotland" placed above. The second line of the "Postscript" has "See vines, an' wines, an' olives rise," instead of as in the printed copy.

ADDRESS TO J. SMITH, *page* 52.

"Friendship! mysterious cement of," &c.

VERSE *second* is wanting, but by way of afterthought it is inserted in the last page of the volume, and in the MS. its position is indicated by a marginal note, thus:—"A verse wanting, vide last page of the book."

Verse *third* is absent from the MS. altogether, and a variation occurs at the close of verse *fourth*, where instead of

"Hae ye a leisure moment's time,
To hear what's comin?"

the author had written

"Will ye lay bye a wee whyle's time,
An' hear what's comin?"

Instead of verse *fifth*, as in the printed copy, we have

"Some rhyme because they like to clash,
An' gie a neebor's name a lash,
An' some (vain thought!) for needfu' cash,
An' some for fame;
For me, I string my dogg'rel trash,
For fun at hame."

Not satisfied with this, he inserted the amended stanza in the last page of the book, beside verse second. No variation occurs till in verse *eleventh* we have, instead of the printed version:—

"Then top and main-top, hoist the sail,
All hands aloft,
And large, before Enjoyment's gale,
Let's scud adrift."

Deletions and interpolations are introduced in the author's hand, correcting the stanza.

In verse *fourteenth*, instead of "Dear deluding woman," we read "Dear bewitching woman." In verse *seventeenth*, instead

of "And haply eye the barren hut," the MS. has "And eye the barren, hungry hut." In the following verse "canie" and "cozie" are transposed. Verse 23rd reads thus in the MS.—

"Honor gie to Willie Pitt,
If he goes on to merit it:
Gie wealth," &c.

The proper alteration is made in the author's hand by deletion and interpolation. Instead of "the ramblin squad" in verse 28th, we have "rantin squad."

WINTER, A DIRGE. *Tune*—M'Pherson, *p.* 56.

THIS is one of the author's juvenile pieces inserted here with a view to publication. A happy amendment in the second half of stanza first is introduced by deletion and interpolation. Instead of, as in the printed copies, "While, tumbling," &c., this MS. has

"Wild, tumbling, brown, the burn runs down,
And roars frae bank to brae;
While bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day."

AN EPISTLE TO DAVY, A BROTHER POET, Jan. 1785, *p.* 57.

GENERALLY speaking this is a beautiful manuscript; and not until we come to stanza vii., is there any deletion. We read

"And even should Misfortunes come,
Yet here I sit that's met wi' some,
An's thankfu' for them yet:"

Not satisfied with this, the author has corrected it thus:—

"I here wha sit has met wi' some."

In stanza ix., the principal variation occurs, thus:

"Fondly dear!
In a' my share of care an' grief,
Which Fate has largely given,
My hope, my comfort an' relief
Are thoughts o' her an' Heaven,
Thou Being, Allseeing," &c,

The above is altered by deletion and interpolation into the text as printed in all editions.

THE DEATH AN' DYING WORDS O' POOR MAILIE,

MY AIN PET YOWE. AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE, *p.* 62.

THE MS. corresponds in all particulars with the printed text of the Kilmarnock edition.

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY, *page* 64.

IN verse first, the third line reads, "Poor Robin's fate is at a close," so also is it in line third of the second verse.—"Or gars poor Robin," &c. The third stanza opens thus:—

"Ay whare he gaed she trotted by him."

The fourth stanza, line first, has "yowe" instead of *sheep;* and instead of ending with "Our Bardie," we read "Now Robin, lanely," &c.

Verse fifth is wanting in the body of the poem, but is inserted after the close, with indication where to place it.

Verse sixth, which is as follows, is deleted, and a fresh stanza (as published) is supplied at the end.

"She was nae get o' runted rams
Wi' woo like gait's, an legs like trams;
She was the flow'r o' Fairlie lambs—
A famous breed!
Now Robin, greetin, chows the hams,
O' Mailie dead."

REMARKS ON POPULAR BALLADS.

A.*

Ayrshire Versions of Popular Ballads.

The following letter, and ballad-fragments annexed, were published by Cromek in volume second of his "Select Scottish Songs, ancient and modern"—London 1810. We might have introduced these in chronological order at page 326, Vol. II., immediately before the poet's Highland Tour; but, to avoid interruption in the biographic progress, their insertion was deferred till a convenient position could be found for them as an Appendix. Cromek obtained the MS. from Lord Woodhouselee in January 1809, as appears from a letter now before us (the property of James T. Gibson Craig, Esq.) addressed by Alexander Fraser Tytler (Lord Woodhouselee) to Cromek, expressing his admiration of "The Reliques of Burns," then recently published.

(2) To William Tytler Esq., of Woodhouselee.

(Cromek, 1810.)

Sir,—Inclosed I have sent you a sample of the old pieces that are still to be found among our peasantry in the West. I had once a great many of such fragments; and some of these *more entire;* but as I had no idea that any body cared for them, I have forgotten them. I invariably hold it sacrilege to add any thing of my own to help out with the shattered wrecks of these venerable old compositions; but they have many various readings. If you have not seen these before, I know they will flatter your true old-style Caledonian feelings; at any rate, I am truly happy to have an opportunity of assuring you how sincerely I am, Revered Sir, your gratefully indebted humble servant, Robert Burns.

Lawnmarket, *Aug.* 1787.†

THE BRAES O' YARROW.

Tune—"Willie's rare."

Nae birdies sang the mirky hour,
Amang the braes of Yarrow,
But slumber'd on the dewy boughs
To wait the waukenin morrow.‡

---

* The remarks on Ballads and Songs are in some manner similar to the notes and anecdotes which Burns promised to make for the Thomson collection. See page 173, *supra.*

† In this, like many other letters of Burns, the year is not given along with the date; and Cromek ventured to insert "1790" in the printed copy—a most palpable error; for the only month of *August* he ever was in Edinburgh was that of 1787.

‡ The beauty of the opening stanza suggests that if the poet reckoned it sacrilege to *add* anything of his own to help out an old fragment, he did not consider it a sin to *prefix* a touch or two for that purpose.

Where shall I gang, my ain true Luve,
  Where shall I gang to hide me?
For weel ye ken, i' your father's bower
  It wad be death to find me.

O go you to yon tavern house,
  An' there count o'er the lawin,
An' if I be a woman true,
  I'll meet you in the dawin.

O he's gane to yon tavern house,
  An' counted owre his lawin,
An' ay he drank to her gude health,
  Was to meet him in the dawin.

But e'er he left yon tavern house,
  An' paid the counted lawin,
There started ben three armed men,
  To meet him in the dawin.

O wae be unto woman's wit,
  It has beguiled many!
She trysted she wad meet me here,
  And sent three men to slay me
  * * * *
Get up, get up now, sister Ann,
  I fear we've wrought you sorrow;
Get up, you'll find your true Luve slain
  Adown the banks o' Yarrow.

She sought him east, she sought him west,
  She sought him braid and narrow,
Till, in the cliftin o' a craig,
  She fand him drown'd in Yarrow.

She's taen three links o' her flowin' hair,
  That hung down lang and yellow,
An' she's tied it about sweet Willie's waist,
  An' drawn him out o' Yarrow.
  * * * *

ROB ROY, THE YOUNGER.*

Tune—A rude set of "The Mill, Mill, O."

Rob Roy from the Highlands came
  Unto the Lawlan' border,

---

* This hero was the son of Rob Roy Macgregor who figured in the Rebellion of 1715. He was outlawed by sentence of the Justiciary Court for non-appearance in his trial for murder of a man named Maclaren in 1736. During his concealment after outlawry he formed the desperate project of carrying off and forcibly accomplishing a marriage with Jane Kaye, heiress of Edenbellie, with a view to obtain her estate. He and his brother, James Macgregor, at the head of a band of armed followers, entered her mother's house, and having seized his intended bride, dragged her out and tied her across a horse, and conveyed her to a wild sequestered place among the mountains of Argyleshire. There, after show of a marriage ceremony, she was forced to bed with the ruffian.

On discovery of her place of concealment she was rescued by her relatives, and Rob Roy, with his brother James, were apprehended and tried for the crime. James escaped from prison before sentence, and was outlawed; while Rob was condemned and executed in February 1753.

To steal away a gay ladye,
  To haud his house in order;
He came o'er the Loch o' Lynn,
  Twenty men his arms did carry;
Himsel gaed in an' fand her out,
  Protesting he would marry.

O will ye gae wi' me, he says,
  An' will ye be my honey?
Or will ye be my wedded wife,
  For I love you the best of any:
I winna gae wi' you, she says,
  Nor will I be your honey;
Nor will I be your wedded wife,
  You love me for my money,
  * * * *
But he set her on a coal-black steed,
  Himsel lap on behind her;
An' he's awa to the Highland hills,
  An' defied her friends to find her.

The song went on to narrate the forcing her to bed: and the tune changes to something like "Jenny dang the weaver."

  * * * *
Rob Roy was my father ca'd,
  Macgregor was his name, ladye;
He led a band o' heroes bold
  And I am here the same, ladye:
Be content, be content,
  Be content to stay, ladye;
For thou art my wedded wife,
  Until thy dying day, ladye.

He was a hedge unto his friends,
  A heckle to his foes, ladye;
Every one that durst him wrong
  He took him by the nose, ladye.
I'm as bold, I'm as bold,
  I'm as bold, and more, ladye;
He that dares my word dispute
  Shall feel my good claymore, ladye.

YOUNG HYN' HORN.

To its ain Tune.

Near Edinburgh was a young son born,
  Hey lily lee, and a how lo lan;
And his name it was called young *Hyn' horn*,
  An' its hey down down deedle airo.

Seven long years he serv'd the King, *Hey lily lee, &c.*
An' its a' for the sake of his daughter Jean,—*An' its hey, &c.*

The King an angry man was he,—*Hey, &c.*
He sent young *Hyn' horn* to the sea,—*An' its, &c.*

But she outwittens o' the King,—*Hey, &c.*
Upon his finger slipt a ring,—*An' its, &c.*

While this, your ring, is bright of hue,—*Hey, &c.*
Then I'm in love with none but you,—*An' its, &c.*

But when the ring grows pale and wan,—*Hey, &c.*
Then I'm in love with another man,—*An' its, &c.*

* * * *

Upon a day he look'd at his ring,—*Hey, &c.*
It was as pale as any thing,—*An' its, &c.*

He has left the sea and come to land,—*Hey, &c.*
And there he met with a beggar man,—*An' its, &c.*

What news, what news, my auld beggar man,—*Hey, &c.*
What news, what news, by sea or lan'?—*An' its, &c.*

Nae news, nae news, the auld beggar said,—*Hey, &c.*
But the King's dochter Jean is going to be wed,—*An' its, &c.*

Cast aff, cast aff thy auld beggar weed,—*Hey, &c.*
And I'll gie thee my gude grey steed,—*An' its, &c.*

* * * *

When he came to the King's castle gate,—*Hey, &c.*
He sought a cup o' wine for young *Hyn' horn's* sake.—*An' its, &c.*

He drank off the wine, and he put in the ring,—*Hey, &c.*
An' now carry that to the King's dochter Jean,—*An' its, &c.*

* * * * * *

O gat ye this by sea, or gat ye this by lan',—*Hey, &c.*
Or gat ye the ring aff a dead man's han'?—*An' its, &c.*

I gat na't by sea, I got na't by lan',—*Hey, &c.*
But I got it frae your ain fair han',—*An' its, &c.*

* * * *

Take off, take off my bridal gown,—*Hey, &c.*
I'll follow this beggar frae town to town,—*An' its, &c.*

Ye need na doff your bridal gown,—*Hey, &c.*
For I'll make you ladye o' mony a town,—*An' its, &c.*

* * * *

APPENDIX B.

Remarks on Scottish Songs and Ballads, inscribed by Burns in an interleaved copy of the first four volumes of Johnson's Musical Museum, belonging to Robert Riddell, Esq. of Glenriddell.

(Cromek, 1808.)

[The following interesting annotations exist in the handwriting of Burns in Captain Riddell's copy of the "Scots Musical Museum;" of which the fourth volume was published in August 1792. After Mr. Riddell's death in April 1794, his widow presented the volumes to her niece, Miss Eliza Bayley of Manchester, to whom Cromek applied for, and obtained, leave to publish our author's notes therein contained.]

Vol. I. Published in May 1787.

Song 1. *The Highland Queen.*

Both music and poetry were composed by a Mr. M'Vicar, purser of the Solway man of war. This I had from Mr. Blacklock.

4. *Bess the Gawkie.*

This song shows that the Scottish Muses did not all leave us when we lost Ramsay and Oswald, as I have good reason to believe that the verses and music are both posterior to the days of these two gentlemen.* It is a beautiful song, and in the genuine Scots taste. We have few pastoral compositions—I mean the pastoral of Nature—that are equal to this.

5. *Lord Gregory.*

It is somewhat singular that, in Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, Wigton, Kirkcudbright, and Dumfries Shires, there is scarcely an old song or tune which, from the title, &c., can be guessed to belong to, or be the production of, these counties. This I conjecture, is one of these very few; as the ballad, which is a long one, is called, both by tradition and in printed collections, "The Lass o' Lochroyan," which I take to be Lochroyan in Galloway.

6. *The Banks of the Tweed.*

This song is one of the many attempts that English composers have made to imitate the Scottish manner, and which I shall, in these strictures, beg leave to distinguish by the appellation of Anglo-Scottish productions. The music is pretty good, but the verses are just above contempt.

7. *The Beds of Sweet Roses.*

This song, so far as I know, for the first time appears here in print. When I was a boy, it was a very popular song in Ayrshire. I remember to have heard those fanatics, the Buchanites, sing some of their nonsensical rhymes, which they dignify with the name of hymns, to this air.†

8. *Roslin Castle.*

These verses were the production of Richard Hewit, a young man that Dr. Blacklock, to whom I am indebted for the anecdote, kept for some years as an amanuensis. I do not know who is the author of the second song to the tune. Tytler, in his amusing history of Scots music, gives the air to Oswald; but in Oswald's own collection of Scots tunes, where he affixes an asterisk to those he himself composed, he does not make the least claim to the tune.‡

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* Its author was the Rev. Dr. James Muirhead of Logan, minister of Urr, in Galloway, Born 1740, Died 1808. The song first appeared in Herd's collection, first edition, 1769.

† See page 379, Vol. I. Shakespeare, in his Winter's Tale, speaks of "Puritans who sing psalms to hornpipes."

‡ Burns afterwards points out that the tune No. 373, to his own words—"A posie to my ain dear May," is probably the progenitor of this admired melody.

9. *Saw Ye Johnie Comin? Quo She.*

This song, for genuine humor in the verses, and lively originality in the air, is unparalleled. I take it to be very old.*

11. *Saw Ye Nae My Peggie.*

This charming song is much older, and indeed superior to, Ramsay's verses "The Toast," as he calls them. There is another set of the words, much older still, and which I take to be the original one, but though it has a very great deal of merit it is not quite ladies' reading.

The original words, for they can scarcely be called verses, seem to be as follows; a song familiar from the cradle to every Scottish ear.

"Saw ye my Maggie, saw ye my Maggie,
Saw ye my Maggie linkin' o'er the lea?
High kilted was she, high kilted was she,
High kilted was she, the coat aboon her knee.

What mark has your Maggie? what mark has your Maggie?
What mark has your Maggie, that I may ken her by?"—&c., &c.

Though it by no means follows that the silliest verses to an air must, for that reason, be the original song; yet I take this ballad, of which I have quoted part, to be the old verses. The two songs in Ramsay, one of them evidently his own, are never to be met with in the fireside circle of our peasantry; while that which I take to be the old song, is in every shepherd's mouth. Ramsay, I suppose, had thought the old verses unworthy of a place in his collection.

13. *The Flowers of Edinburgh.*

This song is one of the many effusions of Scots Jacobitism. The title, "The Flowers of Edinburgh," has no manner of connexion with the present verses, so I suspect there has been an older set of words, of which the title is all that remains.

By the bye, it is singular enough that the Scottish Muses were all Jacobites. I have paid more attention to every description of Scots songs than perhaps any body living has done, and I do not recollect one single stanza, or even the title of the most trifling Scots air, which has the least panegyrical reference to the families of Nassau or Brunswick; while there are hundreds satirizing them. This may be thought no panegyric on the Scots poets; but I mean it as such. For myself, I would always take it as a compliment

* This very unique song appeared in David Herd's earlier edition, 1769; but a standard collection called "The Charmer," (published in 1751) appears to have first produced it. Boswell, in the Journal of his Tour to the Hebrides, thus refers to that collection:—"14 Oct. 1773—Johnson sometimes amused himself with very slight reading; from which, however, his conversation shewed that he contrived to extract some benefit. At Captain M'Lean's he read a good deal in 'The Charmer,' a collection of Songs."

to have it said that my heart ran before my head*—and surely the gallant though unfortunate house of Stewart, the kings of our fathers for so many heroic ages, is a theme much more interesting than * * *

14. *Jamie Gay.*

This is another and a tolerable Anglo-Scottish piece.

15. *My Dear Jockie.*

Another Anglo-Scottish production.

16. *Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' Strae.*

It is self-evident that the first four lines of this song are part of a song more ancient than Ramsay's beautiful verses which are annexed to them. As music is the language of Nature; and poetry, particularly songs, are less or more localized (if I may be allowed the verb) by some of the modifications of time and place, this is the reason why so many of our Scots airs have outlived their original, and perhaps many subsequent sets of verses; except a single name, or phrase, or sometimes one or two lines, simply to distinguish the tunes by.

To this day, among people who know nothing of Ramsay's verses, the following is the song, and all the song that ever I heard:—

"Gin ye meet a bonie lassie
Gie her a kiss and let her gae;
But gin ye meet a dirty hizzie,
Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae.
Fye, gae rub her, rub her, rub her,
Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae:
An' gin ye meet a dirty hizzie,
Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae."

---

*Here in 1810 Cromek introduced a note, thus:—"Poor Burns! Thy heart indeed ran always before thy head; but never didst thou fail to carry thy reader's heart along with thee. Instead of kindling at the indignities offered to thy native land, hadst thou been a wise and prudent poet, thou would'st have tuned thy lyre to the praise of some powerful family, and carefully abstained from drawing on thy head the resentment of the guilty Great, or their descendants. Thou might'st have rolled in affluence, and ceased to struggle under the insulting taunts of every little upstart in office. Thou might'st have flourished in thy day, and left behind thee an offspring securely treading the path of honors and preferment, instead of leaving thy wife and children poor and pennyless, at the mercy of the world. Thy mantle, indeed, has been claimed for the first of a new order of poets, who has done all that thou would'st have disdained to do. The world has seen with astonishment, the solid treasures realized by the speculating Muse; but the meretricious laurel will soon wither around the wearer's brow, and succeeding generations will turn with contempt from the cold and the courtly strain." [Scott's "Lay of the last Minstrel" appeared in Jan. 1805; "Marmion" in Feb. 1808; and the "Lady of the Lake" in May 1810. Cromek's reference here is evidently to Walter Scott, as yet untried as a novelist. Cromek did not survive to witness his greater triumphs: he died in March 1812.—DOUGLAS.]

17. *The Lass o' Livingston.*

The old song, in three eight-line stanzas, is well known, and has merit as to wit and humor; but is rather unfit for insertion. It begins:—

"The bonie Lass o' Liviston,
Her name ye ken, her name ye ken,
And she has writt'n in her contract,
To lie her lane, to lie her lane."

18. *The last time I came o'er the Moor.*

Ramsay found the first line of this song, which had been preserved as the title of the charming air, and then composed the rest of the verses to suit that line. This has always a finer effect than composing English words, or words with an idea foreign to the spirit of the old title. Where old titles of songs convey any idea at all, it will generally be found to be quite in the spirit of the air.*

19. *The Happy Marriage.*

Another, but very pretty, Anglo-Scottish piece.

20. *The Lass o' Patie's Mill.*

In Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland, this song is localized (a verb I must use for want of another to express my idea) somewhere in the North of Scotland, and it is likewise claimed by Ayrshire. The following anecdote I had from the present Sir William Cunningham of Robertland, who had it from the last John, Earl of Loudoun. The then Earl of Loudoun—father to the Earl John before mentioned, had Ramsay at Loudoun, and one day walking together by the banks of Irvine water, near Newmills, at a place yet called "Patie's Mill," they were struck with the appearance of a beautiful country girl. His lordship observed that she would be a fine theme for a song. Allan lagged behind in returning to Loudoun Castle, and at dinner produced this identical song.

21 *and* 22. *The Highland Laddie.*

As this was a favorite theme with our later Scottish Muses, there are several airs and songs of that name. That which I take to be the oldest is to be found in this *Museum* (No. 332), beginning "I hae been at Crookie-den." One reason for my thinking so is that Oswald has it in his collection by the name of "The Auld Highland Laddie." It is also known by the name of "Jinglin John," which is a well-known song of four or five stanzas, and seems to be earlier than Jacobite times. As a proof of this, it is little known to the peasantry by the name of "Highland Laddie;" while every body knows "Jinglin Johnie." That song begins:—

"Jinglin John, the meikle man,
He met a lass was blythe and bonie."

* The reader will find an effort of Burns to fit this air, at page 162, Vol. IV.

Another "Highland Laddie" is also in the *Museum*, Vol. V. (No. 467),* which I take to be Ramsay's original, as he has borrowed the chorus, "O my bonie Highland lad," &c. It consists of three stanzas, besides the chorus, and has humor in its composition. It is an excellent, but somewhat licentious song, beginning:—

"As I cam o'er the Cairney Mount,
And down among the blooming heather," &c.

This air, and the common "Highland Laddie" seem to be only different sets.

Another "Highland Laddie," also in the *Museum*, Vol. V. (No. 468), is the tune of several Jacobite fragments. One of these old songs to it only exists, as far as I know, in these four lines:—

"Whare hae ye been a' day,
Bonie laddie, Highland laddie?
Down the back o' Bell's brae,
Courtin Maggie, courtin Maggie."

Another of this name is Dr. Arne's beautiful air (No. 22, Vol. II.) called, the "New Highland Laddie."†

23. *The Turnimspike.*

Tune—"Clout the Caldron."

There is a stanza in this excellent song for local humor, omitted in this set—where I have placed the asterisms (between the ninth and tenth verses).

"They tak the horse then by the head,
And there they make him stand, man;
Me tell them, me hae seen the day
They no had sic command, man."

A tradition is mentioned in *The Bee*, that the second Bishop Chisholm of Dunblane used to say, that if he was going to be hanged, nothing would soothe his mind so much by the way, as to hear "Clout the Caldron" played.

I have met with another tradition that the old song "Have you any pots or pans, or any broken chandlers?" was composed on one of the Kenmure family, in the cavalier times; and alluded to an amour he had, while under hiding, in the disguise of an itinerant tinker. The air is also known by the name of "The Blacksmith and his apron," which, from the rhythm, seems to have been a line of some old song to the tune.

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* Here we have Burns referring to the *fifth* volume of the *Museum*, which was not published till after his death. The explanation is that Johnson had made considerable progress with the music-plates of that volume at the period when these notes were penned (1793), and proof sheets were in the bard's hands.

† The following memorandum is entered in one of the poet's note books:—

THE HIGHLANDER'S PRAYER, AT SHERIFF-MUIR.

"O Lord be Thou with us: but, if Thou be *not* with us, be not against us; but leave it between the red coats and us!"

25. *Auld Lang Syne.*

Ramsay here, as usual with him, has taken the idea of the song, and the first line, from the old fragment, which will appear in the *Museum*, Vol. V.*

27. *Johnie's Grey Breeks.*

To sing such a beautiful air to such execrable verses (as "The Gentle Swain") is downright prostitution of common sense! The Scots verses indeed are tolerable.†

Though this has certainly every evidence of being a Scottish air, yet there is a well-known tune and song in the north of Ireland, called "The Weaver and his shuttle, O," which, though sung much quicker, is every note the very same tune.

28. *He stole my tender heart away.*

This is an Anglo-Scottish production, but by no means a bad one.‡

32. *Fairest of the Fair.*

It is too barefaced to take Dr. Percy's charming song, and by the means of transposing a few English words into Scots, to offer to pass it for a Scots song. I was not acquainted with the Editor until the first volume was nearly finished, else, had I known in time, I would have prevented such an impudent absurdity.

33. *The Blathrie O't.*§

The following is a set of this song, which was the earliest song I remember to have got by heart. When a child, an old woman‖ sung it to me, and I picked up every word at first hearing.

O Willy, weel I mind, I lent you my hand,
To sing you a song which you then did demand;
But my memory's so bad, I had a'maist forgot,
That you called it "the gear an' the blathrie o't."

---

* The footnote to No. 21 applies to this also.

† The latter are said to be by John Mayne, author of "Logan Braes," and begin thus:—

Jenny's heart was frank and free
  And wooers she had mony; yet
Her sang was ay—Of a' I see,
  Commend me to my Johnie yet.
But air or late, he's sic a gate
  To mak a body cheerie, that
I wish to be, afore I dee,
  His ain kind dearie, yet.

‡ The music is Italian, having been originally composed to Italian words by Signor Thomaso Giordani.

§ "Shame fa' the gear and the blathrie o't," is the turn of an old Scottish song, used when a young handsome girl marries an old man, upon the account of his wealth.—*Kelly's Scots Proverbs.* "The blathrie o't" means "*the silly pleading*, or deplorable influence of it."

‖ This might be Betty Davidson, at Mount Oliphant. See page 352, Vol. I.

I'll sing not of confusion, delusion, or pride,
I'll sing about a laddie was for a virtuous bride;
For virtue is an ornament that time will never rot,
And preferable to gear an' the blathrie o't.

Tho' my lassie hae nae scarlets nor silks to put on,
We envy not the greatest that sits upon a throne;
I wad rather hae my lassie, tho' she cam in her smock,
Than a princess wi' the gear an' the blathrie o't.

Tho' we hae nae horses nor menyie at command
We will toil on our fit, and we'll work wi' our hand;
And when wearied, then our rest will be sweet in any spot,
And we'll value not the gear and the blathrie o't.

If we hae ony babies, we'll reckon them as lent;
Hae we less, hae we mair, we will ay be content;
For the cottar has mair pleasure in the winnin o' a groat,
Than the miser wi' his gear and the blathrie o't.

We'll fash not the affairs o' the kirk or the queen,
They're nae matters for a sang, let them sink, let them swim;
On your kirk I'll ne'er encroach, but I'll hold it still remote,
Sae take this for "the gear and the blathrie o't."

34. *Dainty Davie.*

This song, tradition says, and the composition itself confirms it, was composed on the Rev. David Williamson's getting the daughter of Lady Cherrytrees with child, while a party of dragoons were searching the house to apprehend him for being an adherent to the solemn league and covenant. The pious woman had put a lady's night-cap on him, and had laid him a-bed with her own daughter, and passed him to the soldiery as a lady, her daughter's bed-fellow. A mutilated stanza or two are to be found in Herd's collection, but the original song consists of five or six stanzas, and were their delicacy equal to their wit and humor, they would merit a place in any collection. The first stanza is—

"Being pursued by the dragoons,
Within my bed he was laid down;
And weel I wat, he was worth his room,
For he was my dainty Davie."

Ramsay's song "Lucky Nancy," though he calls it an old song with additions, seems to be all his own except the chorus—

I was ay telling you,
Lucky Nancy, lucky Nancy,
Auld springs wad ding the new,
But ye would never trow me.

which I should conjecture to be part of a song prior to the affair of Williamson.*

35. *May Eve, or Kate of Aberdeen.*

Kate of Aberdeen is, I believe, the work of poor Cunningham the

* Lord Woodhouselee notified to Cromek that Lord President Forbes composed "Lucky Nancy."

player, of whom the following anecdote, though told before, deserves a recital. A fat dignitary of the Church coming past Cunningham on Sunday as the poor poet was plying a fishing rod in some stream near Durham, his reverence reprimanded Cunningham very severely for such an occupation on such a day. The poor poet, with that inoffensive gentleness of manner which was his peculiar characteristic, replied that he hoped God and his reverence would forgive his seeming profanity of that sacred day, "as he had no dinner to eat but what lay at the bottom of that pool." This, Mr. Woods the player, who knew Cunningham well and esteemed him much, assured me was true.

36. *Tweedside.*

In Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany, he tells me that about thirty of the songs in that publication were the works of some young gentleman of his acquaintance; which songs are marked with the letters D. C. &c. Old Mr. Tytler of Woodhouselee, the worthy and able defender of the beauteous Queen of Scots, told me that the songs marked C. in the "Tea-table," were the composition of a Mr. Crawford, of the house of Auchinames, who was afterwards unfortunately drowned coming from France. As Tytler was most intimately acquainted with Allan Ramsay, I think the anecdote may be depended on. Of consequence the beautiful song of "Tweedside" is Mr. Crawford's, and indeed does great honor to his poetical talents. He was a Robert Crawford; the Mary he celebrates was a Mary Stewart, of the Castle-Milk family, afterwards married to a Mr. Ritchie.

I have seen a song, calling itself the "Original Tweedside," and said to have been composed by a Lord Yester. It consisted of two stanzas, of which I recollect the first:—

"When Maggie and I was acquaint,
  I carried my noddle fu' high;
Nae lintwhite on a' the green plain,
  Nor gowdspink so happy as I;
But I saw her sae fair, and I lo'ed;
  I woo'd, but I cam nae great speed;
So now I maun wander abroad,
  And my banes far frae the Tweed."

37. *Mary's Dream.*

The Mary here alluded to is generally supposed to be Miss Mary M'Ghie, daughter to the Laird of Airds, in Galloway. The poet was a Mr. (John) Lowe, who likewise wrote another beautiful song, called "Pompey's Ghost."* I have seen a poetic epistle from him in North America, where he now is, or lately was, addressed to a lady in Scotland. By the strain of the verses it appeared that they allude to some love-disappointment.

* This appears to be a mistake on Burns's part. Lowe could not have been the author of "Pompey's Ghost." See page 361, Vol. II.

40. *The Maid that tends the Goats.*

Mr. Dudgeon (the author of this song) is a respectable farmer's son in Berwickshire. (*See* page 290, Vol. II.)

41. *I wish my Love were in a Mire.*

I never heard more of the words of this old song than the title.

43. *Allan Water.*

This Allan Water (which the composer of the music has honored with the name of the air) I have been told is Allan Water, in Strathallan. (*See* page 175, Vol. IV., for Burns's verses to same air.)

44. *There's nae luck about the House.*

This is one of the most beautiful songs in the Scots, or any language. The lines

"And will I see his face again!
And will I hear him speak!"

as well as the two preceding ones,* are unequalled almost by anything I ever heard or read; and the lines

"The present moment is our ain,
The neist we never saw"

are worthy of the first part. It is long posterior to Ramsay's days. About the year 1771, or 72, it came first on the streets as a ballad;

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* These "two preceding lines," so praised by Burns are

"His very tread has music in't
As he comes up the stair:"

the other couplet so commended—"The present moment," &c., forms part of a double stanza, not found in the original ballad, and which is attributed to Dr. Beattie. It is now pretty generally admitted that Mrs. Jean Adam, schoolmistress, a native of Crawfordsdyke, Greenock (born 1710, died 1765), was the authoress of the ballad, which was first printed in David Herd's Collection, first Edition, 1769, under the title of the "Mariner's Wife," where it consists of nine verses of four lines each, with chorus. The following portions of the song, as given in the *Museum*, have been added since its publication by Herd:—

"The cauld blasts o' the winter wind,
That thirled thro' my heart,
They've a' blawn by, I have him safe,
Till death we'll never part;
But what puts parting in my head?
It may be far awa;
The present moment is our ain,
The neist we never saw.

Since Colin's weel, I'm weel content,
I hae nae mair to crave;
Could I but live to mak him blest,
I'm blest aboon the lave;
Then spread the table neat and clean,
Gar ilka thing look braw;
It's a' for love o' my Goodman,
For he's been lang awa."

and I suppose the composition of the song was not much anterior to that period.

45. *Tarry Woo.*

This is a very pretty song; but I fancy that the first half-stanza, as well as the tune itself, are much older than the rest of the words.

46. *Gramachree.*

This song was composed by Mr. Poe, a counsellor-at-law in Dublin. This anecdote I had from a gentleman who knew the lady—the "Molly"—who is the subject of the song, and to whom Mr. Poe sent the first manuscript of his most beautiful verses. I do not remember any single line that has more true pathos than

"How can she break that honest heart, that wears her in its core!"

but as the song is Irish, it had nothing to do in this collection.

47. *The Collier's Bonie Lassie.*

The first half-stanza is much older than the days of Ramsay. The old words began thus :—

"The collier has a dochter, and O she's wonder-bonie!
A laird he was that sought her, rich baith in lands and money;
She wadna hae a laird, nor wad she be a lady;
But she wad hae a collier, the colour o' her daddie."

49. *My ain kind Deary, O.*

The old words of this song are omitted here, though much more beautiful than those inserted, which were mostly composed by poor Fergusson, in one of his merry humors.* The old words began thus :—

"I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O,
I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O.
Altho' the night were ne'er sae wat,
And I were ne'er sae weary, O,
I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O."

51. *Blink o'er the burn, sweet Bettie.*

The old words, all that I remember, are—

"Blink over the burn, sweet Betty,
'Tis a cauld winter night;
It rains, it hails, it thunders,
The moon she gi'es nae light;
It's for the sake o' sweet Betty,
That e'er I tint my way;
Sweet, let me lie beyond thee,
Until the break o' day.

"O Betty will bake my bread,
And Betty will brew my ale,
And Betty will be my love,
When I come over the dale:

* For Burns's own verses to this air, see page 122, Vol. IV.

Blink over the burn, sweet Betty,
Blink over the burn to me,
And while I hae life, dear lassie,
My ain sweet Betty thou'se be." *

58. *The Blythsome Bridal.*

Tune—"An the Kirk wad let me be."

I find the "Blythsome Bridal" in James Watson's collection of Scots poems, printed at Edinburgh in 1716. This collection, the publisher says, "is the first of its nature which has been published in our own native Scots dialect." It is now extremely scarce.

Tradition, in the western parts of Scotland, tells us that the old song, "An the Kirk wad let me be" (of which there are still two stanzas extant), once saved a covenanting clergyman out of a scrape. It was a little prior to the Revolution—a period when being a Scots Covenanter was being a felon—that one of the clergy who was at that time hunted by the merciless soldiery, fell in, by accident, with a party of the military. The soldiers were not exactly acquainted with the person of the reverend gentleman of whom they were in search; but from some suspicious circumstances they fancied that they had got one of that cloth and opprobrious persuasion among them, in the person of this stranger. *Mass John*, to extricate himself, assumed a freedom of manners very unlike the gloomy strictness of his sect; and, among other convivial exhibitions, sung (and some traditions say *composed* on the spur of the occasion) "Kirk wad let me be" with such effect, that the soldiers swore he was a d———d honest fellow, and that it was impossible he could belong to those hellish conventicles; and so gave him his liberty.

The first stanza of this song, a little altered, is a favorite kind of dramatic interlude acted at country weddings, in the south-west parts of the kingdom. A young fellow is dressed up like an old beggar; a peruke, commonly made of carded tow, represents the hoary locks; an old bonnet; a ragged plaid, or surtout, bound with a straw-rope for a girdle; a pair of old shoes, with straw-ropes twisted round the ancles, as is done by shepherds in snowy weather; his face they disguise as like wretched old age as they can: in this plight he is brought into the wedding-house, frequently to the astonishment of strangers who are not in the secret, and begins to sing—

"I am a silly old man,
My name is Auld Glenae," &c.†

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* One of the lines of this song is quoted in *King Lear*, Act iii., Scene 6. Edgar, in his pretended ravings, while the storm is howling around the head of the frantic old king, cries out:—The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale—Come o'er the burn, Bessie, to me." The "pelting of the pitiless storm" would naturally suggest this song to Edgar—"It rains, it hails, it thunders," &c.

† Gleuae on the small river Ae, in Annandale; the seat and designation of an ancient branch, and the present representative, of the gallant but unfortunate Dalyells of Carnwath.—*R. B.*

He is asked to drink, and by and by to dance, which, after some uncouth excuses, he is prevailed on to do, the fiddler playing the tune (which here is commonly called "Auld Glenae"); in short, he is all the time so plied with liquor that he is understood to get intoxicated, and with all the ridiculous gesticulations of an old drunken beggar, he dances and staggers until he falls on the floor; yet still in all his riot, nay, in his rolling and tumbling on the floor, with one or other drunken motion of his body, he beats time to the music, till at last, he is supposed to be carried out *dead drunk.*

59. *Sae merry as we twa hae been.*

This song is beautiful. The chorus in particular is truly pathetic. I never could learn anything of its author.

"Sae merry as we twa hae been,
Sae merry as we twa hae been;
My heart it is like for to break
When I think on the days we hae seen."

67. *John Hay's Bonie Lassie.*

She was the daughter of John Hay, Earl, or Marquis of Tweeddale, and late Countess-dowager of Roxburgh. She died at Broomlands, near Kelso, sometime between the years of 1720 and 1740.

68. *The Bonie Brucket Lassie.*

The idea of this song is to me very original; the first two lines are all of it that is old. The rest of the song, as well as those songs in the *Museum* marked T, are the works of an obscure, tippling, but extraordinary body of the name of Tytler, commonly known by the name of "Balloon Tytler," from his having projected a balloon; [a mortal, who, though he drudges about Edinburgh as a common printer, with leaky shoes, a sky-lighted hat, and knee-buckles as unlike as George-by-the-grace-of-God, and Solomon-the-son-of-David; yet that same unknown, drunken mortal is author and compiler of three-fourths of Elliot's pompous Encyclopedia Britannica, which he composed at half a guinea a week.] *

73. *Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow.*

Mr. Robertson, in his statistical account of the parish of Selkirk, says that Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow, was descended from the Dryhope, and married into the Harden family. Her daughter was married to a predecessor of the present Sir Francis Elliot of Stobbs, and of the late Lord Heathfield.

There is a circumstance in their contract of marriage that merits attention, as it strongly marks the predatory spirit of the times. The father-in-law agrees to keep his daughter for some time after the

* It is very curious to note that the portion of these remarks which we enclose within brackets is a verbatim copy of part of a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, dated 13th November 1788, published for the first time in Douglas' edition, 1876.

marriage; for which the son-in-law binds himself to give him the profits of the first Michaelmas moon!

74. *Down the Burn, Davie.*

I have been informed that the tune of "Down the burn, Davie," was the composition of David Maigh, keeper of the blood slough hounds belonging to the Laird of Riddell, in Tweeddale.

75. *The Banks of the Forth.*

The air is Oswald's.

80. *The Bush aboon Traquair.*

This is another beautiful song of Mr. Crawford's composition. In the neighborhood of Traquair, tradition still shows the "Old Bush," which, when I saw it in the year 1787, was composed of eight or nine ragged birches. The Earl of Traquair has planted a clump of trees near by, which he calls the "New Bush."

82. *My Deary, if thou Die.*

Another beautiful song of Crawford's.

83. *She rose and let me in.*

The old set of this song, which is still to be found in printed collections, is much prettier than this; but somebody (I believe it was Ramsay) took it into his head to clear it of some seeming indelicacies, and made it at once more chaste and more dull.*

85. *Go to the Ewe-bughts, Marion.*

I am not sure if this old and charming air be of the South, as is commonly said, or of the North of Scotland. There is a song, apparently as ancient as "Ewe-bughts, Marion," which sings to the same tune, and is evidently of the North. It begins thus:—

"The Lord o' Gordon had three dochters,
Mary, Marget, and Jean,
They wad na stay at bonie Castle Gordon,
But awa to Aberdeen."

86. *Lewis Gordon.*

This air is a proof how one of our Scots tunes comes to be composed out of another. I have one of the earliest copies of the song, and it has prefixed—"Tune of Tarry Woo;" of which tune a different

* The above note shows how far prejudice will carry even a reasonable mind like that of Burns. Stenhouse informs us that the old indelicate, although certainly poetical, song, by Francis Semple of Beltrees, was "retouched by a masterly hand, who thus presented us with a song at once chaste and elegant, in which all the energetic force and beauty of the original are preserved, without a single idea to crimson the cheek of modesty, or to cause one pang to the innocent and feeling heart." In fact the song still remains in the "Tea-table Miscellany," the "Orpheus Caledonius," and in Herd's collection, in its primitive state of indelicacy.

We first find this improved edition of "She rose and let me in" in a collection called "The Blackbird," 1764, edited by "William Hunter, Philo-Architectonicæ."

set has insensibly varied into a different air. To a Scots critic, the pathos of the line:—

"Tho' his back be at the wa',"

must be very striking. It needs not a Jacobite prejudice to be affected with this song. The supposed author of the song was a Mr. Geddes, priest at Shenval, in the Ainzie.*

87. *The Waukin' o' the Fauld.*

There are two stanzas still sung to this tune which I take to be the original song, whence Ramsay composed his beautiful song of that name in the Gentle Shepherd. It begins

"O will ye speak at our town,
As ye come frae the fauld."

I regret that, as in many of our old songs, the delicacy of the old fragment is not equal to its wit and humor.

89. *Oh ono Chrio.*

Dr. Blacklock informed me that this song was composed on the infamous massacre of Glencoe.

91. *I'll never Leave Thee.*

This is another of Crawford's songs, but I do not think in his happiest manner. What an absurdity to join such names as Adonis and Mary together!

93. *Corn Rigs are Bonie.*

All the old words that ever I could meet to this air were the following, which seem to have been an old chorus.

O corn rigs and rye rigs,
O corn rigs are bonie;
And whene'er you meet a bonie lass,
Preen up her cockernony.

96. *The Muckin' o' Geordie's Byre.*

The chorus of this song is old; the rest is the work of "Balloon Tytler."

97. *Bide ye Yet.*

There is a beautiful song to this tune beginning "Alas! my son, you little know," which is the composition of a Miss Jenny Graham, of Dumfries.†

MUSEUM, Vol. II. published March 1, 1788.

102. *Tranent Muir.*

Composed by a Mr. Skirving, a very worthy, respectable farmer, near Haddington. I have heard the anecdote often that Lieutenant Smith, whom he satirises in the ninth stanza, came to Haddington

* For some account of "Priest Geddes," see page 253, Vol. III.
† It appeared in Herd's first edition, 1769.

after the publication of the song, and sent a challenge to Skirving to meet him there, and answer for the unworthy manner in which he had noticed him in the song.—"Gang awa back," said the honest farmer, "and tell Mr. Smith that I hae nae leisure to come to Haddington; but tell him to come here, and I'll tak a leuk o' him; and if I think I'm fit to fecht him, I'll fecht him; and if no, I'll do as he did—I'll rin awa!"

103. *To the Weaver's gin ye go.**

The chorus of this song is old, the rest of it is mine. Here once for all, let me apologise for many silly compositions of mine in this work. Many beautiful airs wanted words; in the hurry of other avocations, if I could string a parcel of rhymes together anything near tolerable, I was fain to let them pass. He must be an excellent poet indeed, whose every performance is excellent.

104. *Strephon and Lydia.*

The following account of this song I had from Dr. Blacklock:—The "Strephon and Lydia" mentioned in the song were perhaps the loveliest couple of their time. The gentleman was commonly known by the name of "Beau Gibson." The lady was the "Gentle Jean" celebrated somewhere in Mr. Hamilton of Bangour's poems. Having frequently met in public places, they had formed a reciprocal attachment, which their friends thought dangerous, as their resources were by no means adequate to their tastes and habits of life. To elude the bad consequences of such a connexion, Strephon was sent abroad with a commission, and perished in Admiral Vernon's expedition to Carthagena.

The author of the song was William Wallace, Esq., of Cairnhill, in Ayrshire.

107. *I'm o'er Young to Marry yet.*

The chorus of this song is old. The rest of it—such as it is—is mine. (*See* page 147, Vol. II.)

109. *Love is the cause of my Mourning.*

The words of "The Shepherd's Complaint" are by a Mr. R. Scott, from the town or neighborhood of Biggar.

111. *My Jo, Janet.*

Johnson, the publisher, with a foolish delicacy, refused to insert the last stanza of this humorous ballad, which Ramsay printed entire in the Tea-table Miscellany:—

"My spinnin wheel is auld and stiff,
The rock o't winna stand, sir;
To keep the temper-pin in tiff,
Requires right aft my hand, sir;

* See page 148, Vol. II., for Burns's words.

Mak the maist o't that ye can,
Janet, Janet,
But like it never wale a man,
My Jo, Janet!"

113. *The Birks of Aberfeldy.*

I composed these stanzas, standing under the falls of Aberfeldy, at or near Moness. (*See* page 109, Vol. II.)

114. *M'Pherson's Farewell.*

M'Pherson, a daring robber, in the beginning of this century, was condemned to be hanged at the assizes of Inverness.* He is said, when under sentence of death, to have composed this tune, which he called his own Lament, or Farewell. Gow has published a variation of this fine tune as his own composition, which he calls "The Princess Augusta."

117. *The Highland Lassie, O.*

This was a composition of mine in very early life, before I was known at all in the world. My "Highland Lassie" was a warm-hearted, charming young creature as ever blessed a man with generous love. After a pretty long tract of the most ardent reciprocal attachment, we met by appointment, on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the Banks of Ayr, where we spent the day in taking farewell, before she should embark for the West Highlands, to arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life At the close of Autumn following she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenock, where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to the grave in a few days, before I could even hear of her illness.†

120. *Fife and a' the lands about it.*

This song is Dr. Blacklock's. He, as well as I, often gave Johnson verses, trifling enough perhaps; but they served as a vehicle to the music.

121. *Were na my heart light, I would die.*

Lord Hailes, in his notes to his collection of Scots poems, says that this song was the composition of a Lady Grisell Baillie, daughter of the first Earl of Marchmont, and wife of George Baillie of Jerviswood.‡

125. *The Young Man's Dream.*

This song is a composition of "Balloon Tytler."

132. *Strathallan's Lament.*

This air is the composition of one of the worthiest and best-hearted

* Error for "Banff," see page 149, Vol. II.

† Highland Mary episode, see Vol. II., page 176.

‡ This lady was born in 1665, and died in 1746. A fine memoir of her was published by her daughter, Lady Murray of Stanhope.

men living, Allan Masterton, Schoolmaster in Edinburgh. As he and I were both sprouts of Jacobitism, we agreed to dedicate the words and air to that cause. But to tell the matter of fact, except when my passions were heated by some accidental cause, my Jacobitism was merely by way of *vive la bagatelle.*

133. *What will I do gin my Hoggie die?*

Dr. Walker, who was Minister in Moffat in 1772, and is now (1791) Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh, told the following anecdote concerning this air. He said that some gentlemen, riding a few years ago through Liddesdale, stopped at a hamlet consisting of a few houses, called Mosspaul (in Ewesdale); when they were struck with this tune, which an old woman, spinning on a rock at her door, was singing. All she could tell concerning it was, that she was taught it when a child, and it was called "What will I do gin my Hoggie die?" No person, except a few females at Mosspaul, knew this fine old tune; which in all probability would have been lost, had not one of the gentlemen, who happened to have a flute with him, taken it down. (*See* page 153, Vol. II.)

140. *Up in the Morning Early.*

The chorus of this is old; the two stanzas are mine. (*See* page 157, Vol. II.)

141. *The Tears of Scotland.*

Dr. Blacklock told me that Smollett, who was at bottom a great Jacobite, composed these beautiful and pathetic verses on the infamous depredations of the Duke of Cumberland after the battle of Culloden.

146. *I dreamed I lay where Flowers were Springing.*

These two stanzas I composed when I was seventeen; they are among the oldest of my printed pieces. (*See* page 7, Vol. I.)

151. *Ah! the poor Shepherd's mournful fate.*

The old tune "Sour Plums o' Gallashiels," probably was the beginning of a song to this air which is now lost.

The tune of Gallashiels was composed about the beginning of the present century by the Laird of Gallashiels's piper.

157. *The Banks of the Devon.*

These verses were composed on a charming girl, a Miss Charlotte Hamilton, who is now married to James M'Kitrick Adair, Esq., physician. She is sister to my worthy friend Gavin Hamilton, of Mauchline, and was born on the banks of Ayr, but was, at the time I wrote these lines, residing at Harvieston, in Clackmannanshire, on the romantic banks of the little river Devon. I first heard the air from a lady in Inverness, and got the notes taken down for the work. (*See* page 129, Vol. II.)

158. *Waly! Waly!*

In the west country I have heard a different edition of the second stanza. Instead of the four lines beginning with "When cockle shells," &c.,* the other way ran thus :—

"O wherefore need I busk my head?
Or wherefore need I kame my hair?
Sin' my fause Luve has me forsook,
And says he'll never loe me mair."

160. *Duncan Gray.*

Dr. Blacklock informed me that he had often heard the tradition that this air was composed by a carman in Glasgow.

161. *Dumbarton Drums.*

This is the last of the West Highland Airs; and from it, over the whole tract of country to the confines of Tweedside, there is hardly a tune or song that one can say has taken its origin from any place or transaction in that part of Scotland. The oldest Ayrshire reel is "Stewarton Lasses," which was made by the father of the present Sir Walter Montgomery Cunningham, *alias* Lord Lysle, since which period there has indeed been local music in that country in great plenty. "Johnie Faa" is the only old song which I could ever trace as belonging to the extensive district of Ayrshire.

162. *Cauld Kail in Aberdeen.*

This song is by the present Duke of Gordon. The old verses are:—

"There's cauld kail in Aberdeen,
And castocks in Strathbogie;
When ilka lad maun hae his lass,
Then fye, gie me my coggie.

Chorus.—My coggie, sirs, my coggie, sirs,
I canna want my coggie;
I wadna gie my three-girr'd caup
For e'er a quean in Bogie.

There's Johnie Smith has got a wife
That scrimps him o' his coggie;
If she were mine, upon my life,
I'd donk her in a bogie.
My coggie, sirs," &c.

163. *For lack of gold.*

The country girls in Ayrshire, instead of the line "She me forsook for a great Duke," say "For Athole's Duke she me forsook," which I take to be the original reading.†

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* The wretched four lines introduced in the second stanza thus complained of by Burns, are not found in any of the old editions. In the Tea-table Miscellany, Vol. II., 1726, the words are as quoted above by Burns. So also in the "Charmer," 1751, and David Herd's collection, 1769.

† This song is in "The Charmer," 1751.

These words were composed by the late Dr. Austin, physician in Edinburgh. He had courted a lady, to whom he was shortly to be married; but the Duke of Athole having seen her, became so much in love with her, that he made proposals of marriage, which were accepted of, and she "jilted the Doctor."

166. *Here's a Health to my true love.*

This song is Dr. Blacklock's. He told me that tradition gives the air to our James IV. of Scotland.

170. *Hey tutti taitie.*

I have met the tradition universally over Scotland, and particularly about Stirling, in the neighborhood of the scene, that this air was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn.

173. *Raving winds around her blowing.*

I composed these verses on Miss Isabella Macleod of Rasa, alluding to her feelings on the death of her sister, and the still more melancholy death of her sister's husband, the late Earl of Loudoun, who shot himself out of sheer heart-break at some mortifications he suffered owing to the deranged state of his finances. (*See* page 155, Vol. II.)

174. *Ye Gods, was Strephon's Picture blest?*
Tune—"Fourteenth of October."

The title of this air shows that it alludes to the famous King Crispan, the patron of the honorable Corporation of Shoemakers. St. Crispan's day falls on the fourteenth of October, old style, as the old proverb tells.

"On the fourteenth of October
Was ne'er a sutor sober."*

176. *Since robbed of all that charm'd my view.*
Tune—"Miss Hamilton's Delight."

The old name of this air is "The blossom o' the Raspberry." The song is Dr. Blacklock's.

178. *Young Damon.*

The air is by Oswald.

179. *Musing on the roaring Ocean.*

I composed these verses out of compliment to a Mrs. M'Lachlan, whose husband is an Officer in the East Indies. (*See* p. 162, Vol. II.)

180. *Blythe was she.*

I composed these verses while I stayed at Ochtertyre with Sir William Murray. The lady, who was also at Ochtertyre at the same time, was a well-known toast, Miss Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, who was

* On the other hand, Ritson contends that the air is in honor of King James VII., whose birthday was on 14th October.

called, and very justly, "The Flower of Strathmore." (*See* page 126, Vol. II.)

181. *Johnie Faa, the Gipsey Laddie.*

The people in Ayrshire begin this song—"The Gypsies cam to Lord Cassilis' yett." They have a great many more stanzas in this song than I ever saw in any printed copy. The castle is still remaining at Maybole, where his Lordship shut up his wayward spouse, and kept her for life in confinement.

182. *To Daunton me.*

The two following old stanzas to this tune have some merit:—

"To daunton me, to daunton me,
O ken ye what it is that'll daunton me?
There's eighty-eight and eighty-nine,
And a' that I hae born sinsyne;
There's cess and press and Presbytrie,
I think it will do meikle for to daunton me.

But to wanton me, to wanton me,
O ken ye what it is that wad wanton me?
To see gude corn upon the rigs,
And banishment among the Whigs,
And right restored where right sud be,
I think it wad do meikle for to wanton me."

183. *Polwarth on the Green.*

The author is Captain John Drummond M'Grigor, of the family of Bochaldie.

184. *Absence, a song in the manner of Shenstone.*

The song and air are both by Dr. Blacklock.

185. *I had a horse and I had nae mair.*

This story is founded on fact. A John Hunter, ancestor to a very respectable farming family who live in a place in the parish (I think) of Galston, called Barr-mill, was the luckless hero that "had a horse and had nae mair." For some little youthful follies he found it necessary to make a retreat to the West Highlands, where he "feed himself to a *Highland* laird," for that is the expression of all the oral editions of the song I ever heard. The present Mr. Hunter, who told me the anecdote, is the great grandchild to our hero.*

188. *Up and waur them a', Willie.*

This edition of the song I got from *Tam Neil*, of facetious fame in Edinburgh. The proper expression is "Up and warn a', Willie," alluding to the Crantara, or warning of a Highland Clan to arms. Not understanding this, the Lowlanders in the west, and south, say "Up and *waur* them a', Willie."†

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* We first find this clever song, under the title of "The Surprise," in Herd's collection, first edition, 1769.

† The "Gaelic parson" has certainly misled the poet in this matter. "Up an' *waur* them a'" is the common-sense and characteristic phrase which fits the intention of the song.

189. *A Rosebud by my early walk.*

This song I composed on Miss Jenny Cruikshank, only child to my worthy friend, Mr. Wm. Cruikshauk, of the High School, Edinburgh. The air is by David Sillar, *quondam* Merchant, and now schoolmaster in Irvine. He is the "Davie" to whom I address my printed poetical epistle in the measure of "The Cherry and the Slae." (*See* page 127, Vol. II.)

191. *Hooly and Fairly.*

It is remark-worthy that the song of "Hooly and Fairly" in all the old editions of it, is called "The Drucken Wife o' Galloway," which localizes it to that country-side.*

194. *Rattlin, roarin Willie.*

The last stanza of this song is mine; it was composed out of compliment to one of the worthiest fellows in the world, William Dunbar, Esq., Writer to the Signet, Edinburgh, and Colonel of the Chrochallan corps, a club of wits who took that title at the time of raising the fencible regiments. (*See* page 64, Vol. II.)

195. *Where, braving angry Winter's storms.*

This I composed on one of the most accomplished of women, Miss Peggy Chalmers that was, now Mrs. Lewis Hay, of Forbes and Co's Bank, Edinburgh. (*See* page 131, Vol. II.)

196. *Tibbie, I hae seen the day.*

This song I composed about the age of seventeen. (*See* p. 4, Vol. I.)

197. *Nancy's Ghost.*

This song is by Dr. Blacklock.

199. *Cromlet's Lilt.*

The following interesting account of this plaintive Dirge was communicated to Mr. Riddell by Alexander Fraser Tytler, Esq., of Woodhouselee:†—"In the latter end of the 16th century, the eldest son of Chisholm of Cromleck (an estate now possessed by the Drummonds) was much attached to a daughter of Stirling of Ardoch, commonly called Fair Helen of Ardoch. At that period most of our young men of family sought a fortune, or a grave, in France. Cromlus, when he went abroad, was induced to leave the management of his correspondence with his mistress to a lay brother of the monastery of Dunblane, in that neighborhood. This man, unfortunately, became himself deeply attached to Helen, and by keeping up letters

* We find this song, under the title mentioned by Burns, in several old collections, the first of these being "The Charmer," 1751. Its first line should be "Down in yon meadow a couple did tarry."

† That gentleman, in a letter to Cromek, dated 22d January 1809, disclaimed all knowledge of this romantic story; so the likelihood is that it came from his father, the venerable William Tytler of Woodhouselee.

and messages entrusted to him, and by telling her stories to the disadvantage of Cromlus, he managed to irritate both of the lovers, and all connexion was broken off betwixt them.

"Helen was inconsolable, and Cromlus retired to a Hermitage where he composed the 'Lilt' which is identified with his name; and when the artful monk thought time had sufficiently softened Helen's sorrow, he proposed himself as a lover. Helen was obdurate; but at length, overcome by her brother's persuasions, she submitted, rather than consented to the marriage, but there her compliance ended. When forcibly put to bed, she started from it quite frantic, and screaming out that she heard three taps on the wainscot at the bed-head, with these words in the voice of Cromlus—'Helen, Helen, mind me!' Soon thereafter Cromlus arrived at home, and discovered the treachery of the confident—the fraudulent marriage was disannulled, and Helen became Lady Cromleck.

"*N. B.*—Helen's brother, above referred to, was the father of 31 children, his wife Margaret Murray, being a daughter of Murray of Struan, one of the 17 sons of Tullybardine, and whose youngest son, commonly called the 'Tutor of Ardoch,' died in 1715, aged 111 years."

MUSEUM, Vol. III. published 2d February, 1790.

201. *The Marquis of Huntly's Reel.*

The song was composed by the Rev. John Skinner, nonjurer Clergyman at Linshart, near Peterhead. He is likewise the author of "Tullochgorum," "Ewie wi' the crooked horn," "John o' Badenyond," &c., and what is of still more consequence, he is one of the worthiest of mankind. He is also the author of an ecclesiastical history of Scotland. The air is by Mr. Marshall, butler to the Duke of Gordon, the first composer of Strathspeys in the age. I have been told by somebody who had it of Marshall himself, that he took the idea of his three most celebrated pieces—"Marquis of Huntly's Reel," his "Farewell," and "Miss Admiral Gordon's Reel,"—from the old air, "The German Lairdie." *

203. *Gil Morrice.*

"This plaintive ballad ought to have been called 'Child Maurice,' and not 'Gil Morrice.' In its present dress, it has gained immortal honor from Mr. Home's taking from it the ground-work of his fine tragedy of 'Douglas.' But I am of opinion that the present ballad is a modern composition; perhaps not much above the age of the middle of last century; at least I should be glad to see or hear of a copy of the present words prior to 1650. That it was taken from an old ballad, called 'Child Maurice,' now lost, I am inclined to believe;

* Any reader who is acquainted with this latter tune, as well as Marshall's fine compositions, will smile at the poet's simplicity in giving credence to so unlikely a parentage.

but the present one may be classed with 'Hardycanute' (first printed in 1719), 'Kenneth,' 'Duncan,' the 'Laird of Woodhouselee,' 'Lord Livingston,' 'Binnorie,' 'The Death of Monteith,' and several other modern productions, which have been swallowed by many readers, as ancient fragments of old poems.

"This beautiful, plaintive tune was composed by Mr. M'Gibbon, the selector of a collection of Scots tunes."—*Robt. Riddell.*

In addition to the observations on "Gil Morrice," I add, that of the ballads which Captain Riddell mentions, "Kenneth" and "Duncan" are juvenile compositions of Mr. M'Kenzie, the "Man of Feeling." Mr. M'Kenzie's father shewed them in MSS. to Dr. Blacklock, as the productions of his son, from which the Doctor rightly prognosticated that the young poet would make, in his more advanced years, a respectable figure in the world of letters. This I had from Blacklock.

R. B.

205. *When I upon thy Bosom lean.*

This song was the work of a very worthy, facetious old fellow, John Lapraik, of Dalfram, near Muirkirk; which little property he was obliged to sell in consequence of some connexion as security for some persons concerned in that villanous bubble, *The Ayr Bank.* He has often told me that he composed this song one day when his wife had been fretting over their misfortunes. (*See* page 110, Vol. I.)

207. *Tibbie Dunbar.*

This tune is said to be the composition of John M'Gill, fiddler in Girvan. He called it after his own name.

209. *My Harry was a Gallant gay.*

The oldest title I ever heard to this air was "The Highland Watch's Farewell to Ireland." The chorus I picked up from an old woman in Dumblane; the rest of the song is mine. (*See* page 104, Vol. III.)

210. *The Highland Character.*

This tune was the composition of General Reid, and called by him "The Highland, or 42d Regiment's March." The words ("In the garb of old Gaul") are by Sir Harry Erskine.

211. *Leaderhaughs and Yarrow.*

There is, in several collections, the old song of this name. It seems to have been the work of one of our itinerant minstrels, as he calls himself, at the conclusion of his song "Minstrel Burn."

212. *The Tailor fell thro' the bed, thimble an' a'.*

This air is the march of the Corporation of Tailors. The second and fourth stanzas are mine.

215. *Beware o' Bonie Anne.*

I composed this song out of compliment to Miss Ann Masterton, the daughter of my friend, Allan Masterton, the author of the air

"Strathallan's Lament," and two or three others in this work. (*See* page 51, Vol. III.)

216. *This is no my ain House.*

The first half-stanza is old, the rest is Ramsay's. The tune is an old Highlaud air, called *Shuan truish willighan.* The old words are :—

"O this is no my ain house, my ain house, my ain house,
This is no my ain house, I ken by the biggin o't.
There's bread and cheese are my door-checks, my door-cheeks, &c.,
There's bread and cheese are my door-cheeks, an' pancakes the riggin o't.

This is no my ain wean, my ain wean, my ain wean,
This is no my ain wean, I ken by the greetie o't,
I'll tak my curchie aff my head, aff my head, aff my head,
I'll tak my curchie aff my head, an row't about the feetie o't."

218. *Laddie, lie near me.*

This song ("Hark the loud tempest shakes") is by Blacklock.

220. *The Gardener wi' his paidle.*

The air is the "Gardener's March." The title of the song only is old ; the rest is mine. (*See* page 67, Vol. III.)

224. *The Day returns, my Bosom burns.*
Tune—"Seventh of November."*

I composed this song out of compliment to one of the happiest and worthiest married couples in the world—Robert Riddell, Esq., of Glenriddell, and his lady. At their fireside I have enjoyed more pleasant evenings than at all the houses of fashionable people in this country put together ; and to their kindness and hospitality I am indebted for many of the happiest hours of my life. (*See* page 18, Vol. III.)

226. *The Gaberlunzie Man.*

This song is supposed to commemorate an intrigue of James the V. Mr. Callander of Craigforth published, some years ago, an edition of "Christ's Kirk on the Green," and the "Gaberlunzie Man," with notes critical and historical. James the V. is said to have been fond of Gosford, in Aberlady Parish, and it was suspected by his contemporaries that in his frequent excursions to that part of the country he had other purposes in view besides golfing and archery.

Three favorite ladies, Sandilands, Weir, and Oliphant (one of whom resided at Gosford, and the others in the neighborhood), were occasionally visited by their royal and gallant admirer, which gave rise to the following satirical advice to his Majesty, from Sir David Lindsay, of the Mount ; Lord Lyon :—

"Sow not your seed on Sandy lands,
Spend not your strength in Weir,
And ride not on an Elephant,
For spoiling o' your gear."

* The 7th of November was the marriage day of the worthy couple, and the air was Mr. Riddell's composition.

228. *The Black Eagle.*

This song is by Dr. Fordyce, whose merits as a prose writer are well known.

229. *Jamie, come try me.*

This air is Oswald's; the song is mine. (*See* page 71, Vol. III.)

231. *My Bonie Mary.*

This air is Oswald's; the first half stanza:—

"Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
And fill it in a silver tassie,
That I may drink before I go
A service to my bonie lassie."

is old, the rest mine.

232. *The Lazy Mist.*

This song is mine. (*See* page 22, Vol. III.)

234. *Johnie Cope.*

This satirical song was composed to commemorate General Cope's defeat at Prestonpans in 1745, when he marched against the Clans. The air was the tune of an old song, of which I have heard some verses, but now only remember the title, which was "Will ye go to the coals in the morning?"

235. *I love my Jean.*

This air is by Marshall, the song I composed out of compliment to Mrs. Burns. *N.B.*—It was during the honeymoon. (*See* page 3, Vol. III.)

242. *The Mill, Mill, O.*

The original, or at least a song evidently prior to Ramsay's, is still extant. It runs thus:—

"As I cam down yon water side,
And by yon sheelin-hill, O,
There I spied a bonie, bonie lass,
And a lass that I loed right weel, O.

Chorus—The mill, mill, O, and the kill, kill, O,
And the coggin o' Peggy's wheel, O,
The sack and the sieve, an' a' she did leave,
For dancin' the miller's reel, O."*

246. *Cease, cease, my dear Friend.*

This song is by Dr. Blacklock; I believe, but am not quite certain, that the air is his too.

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* The reader scarcely needs to be reminded that out of this rough material sprung the charming ballad, "The Soldier's Return."

247. *Auld Robin Gray.*

This air was formerly called "the Bridegroom greets when the sun gangs down."

250. *Tak your auld cloak about ye.*

A part of this old song, according to the English set of it, is quoted in Shakspeare. (*In the Drinking scene in Othello.*)

252. *Donald and Flora.*

This is one of those few Gaelic tunes, preserved from time immemorial in the Hebrides; they seem to be the ground-work of many of our finest Scots pastoral tunes.* The words of this song were written to commemorate the unfortunate expedition of General Burgoyne in America, in 1777.

255. *O were I on Parnassus Hill.*

This air is Oswald's: the song I made out of compliment to Mrs. Burns. (*See* page 20, Vol. III.)

257. *The Captive Ribband.*

This air is called *Robie donna Gorach.* (*See* page 112, Vol. III.)

258. *There's a Youth in this city.*

This air is claimed by Neil Gow, who calls it his Lament for his brother. The first half-stanza of the song is old; the rest is mine. (*See* page 79, Vol. III.)

259. *My Heart's in the Highlands.*

The first half-stanza of this song is old; the rest is mine. (*See* page 113, Vol. III.)

264. *Ca' the Ewes to the Knowes.*

This beautiful song is in the true old Scotch taste, yet I do not know that either air or words were in print before. (*See* page 101, Vol. III.)

269. *The Bridal o't.*

This song is the work of a Mr. Alexander Ross, late Schoolmaster at Lochlee; and author of a beautiful Scots poem, called "The Fortunate Shepherdess."

270. *The Bob o' Dumblane.*

Ramsay, as usual, has modernized this song. The original, which

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* The very reverse seems to have been the case. The pastoral tunes of the lowlands travelled northwards, and became the groundwork of what are now styled "Gaelic melodies."

I learned on the spot, from my old hostess in the principal Inn there, is :—

"Lassie, lend me your braw hemp heckle,
And I'll lend you my thripplin-kame;
My heckle is broken, it canna be gotten,
And we'll gae dance the bob o' Dumblane.

Twa gaed to the wood, to the wood, to the wood,
Twa gaed to the wood—three came hame;
An it be na weel bobbit, weel bobbit, weel bobbit,
An it be na weel bobbit, we'll bob it again."

I insert this song to introduce the following anecdote, which I have heard well authenticated. In the evening of the day of the battle of Dunblane (Sheriff-muir), when the action was over, a Scots officer in Argyle's army, observed to his Grace, that he was afraid the rebels would give out to the world that *they* had gotten the victory. "Weel, weel," answered his Grace, alluding to the foregoing ballad, "if they think it be nae well bobbit, we'll bob it again."

271. *A Mother's Lament for the Death of her Son.*

Tune—"Finlayston House."

This most beautiful tune is, I think, the happiest composition of that bard-born genius, John Riddell, of the family of Glengarnock at Ayr. The words were composed to commemorate the much lamented and premature death of James Ferguson, Esq., junior, of Craigdarroch. (*See* page 19, Vol. III.)

275. *Todlen Hame.*

This is, perhaps, the *first** bottle song that ever was composed.

276. *The Braes o' Ballochmyle.*

This air is the composition of my friend Allan Masterton, in Edinburgh. I composed the verses on the amiable and excellent family of Whitefoord's leaving Ballochmyle, when Sir John's misfortunes had obliged him to sell the estate. (*See* page 141, Vol. I.)

278. *The Shepherd's Preference.*

This song is Blacklock's. I don't know how it came by the name, but the oldest appellation of the air was "Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad." It has little affinity to the tune commonly known by that name.

* First—Burns here means finest or best.—G. G.

282. *We ran, and they ran.*

The author was a Rev. Mr. Murdoch M'Lennan, minister at Crathie, Deeside.*

284. *The Bonie Banks of Ayr.*

I composed this song as I conveyed my chest so far on the road to Greenock, where I was to embark in a few days for Jamaica. I meant it as my farewell Dirge to my native land. (*See* page 35, Vol. II.)

285. *John o' Badenyond.*

This excellent song is the composition of my worthy friend, old Skinner at Linshart.

286. *The Rantin Dog the Daddie o't.*

I composed this song pretty early in life, and sent it to a young girl, a very particular acquaintance of mine, who was at that time under a cloud. (*See* page 248, Vol. I.)

288. *A Waukrife Minnie.*

I picked up this old song and tune from a country girl at Nithsdale. I never met with it elsewhere in Scotland. (*See* page 111, Vol. III.)

289. *Tullochgorum.*

This, first of songs, is the master-piece of my old friend Skinner. He was passing the day, at the town of Cullen I think it was, in a friend's house whose name was Montgomery. Mrs. Montgomery observing, *en passant*, that the beautiful reel of Tullochgorum wanted words, she begged them of Mr. Skinner, who gratified her wishes, and the wishes of every lover of Scottish song, in this most excellent ballad.

These particulars I had from the author's son, Bishop Skinner of Aberdeen.

290. *For a' that and a' that.*

This song is mine, all except the chorus. (*See* page 178, Vol. I.)

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* This clever ballad on the battle of Sheriff-muir, was printed by David Herd in 1769. Another song on the same subject, in form of a dialogue, was written by Mr. Barclay, the Berean minister in Edinburgh. Burns composed a ballad on the model of Mr. Barclay's. (*See* p. 106, Vol. III.)

291. *Willie brew'd a peck o' maut.*

This air is Masterton's; the song mine. The occasion of it was this:—Mr. Wm. Nicol, of the High School, Edinburgh, during the autumn vacation being at Moffat, honest Allan (who was at that time on a visit to Dalswinton) and I went to pay Nicol a visit. We had such a joyous meeting that Mr. Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, that we should celebrate the business. (*See* page 97, Vol. III.)

292. *The Braes o' Killiecrankie.*

The battle of Killiecrankie was the last stand made by the Clans for James, after his abdication. Here the gallant Lord Dundee fell in the moment of victory, and with him fell the hopes of the party. General M'Kay, when he found the Highlanders did not pursue his flying army, said, "Dundee must be killed, or he never would have overlooked this advantage." A great stone marks the spot where Dundee fell. (*See* page 108, Vol. III.)

293. *The Ewie wi' the crooked horn.*

Another excellent song of old Skinner's.

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301. *Craigieburn Wood.*

It is remarkable of this air, that it is the confine of that country where the greatest part of our Lowland music (so far as from the title, words, &c., we can localize it) has been composed. From Craigieburn, near Moffat, until one reaches the West Highlands, we have scarcely one slow air of antiquity.

The song was composed on a passion which a Mr. Gillespie, a particular friend of mine, had for a Miss Lorimer, afterwards a Mrs. Whelpdale. The young lady was born in Craigieburn Wood. The chorus is part of an old foolish ballad. (*See* page 33, Vol. IV.)

302. *Frae the Friends and Land I love.*

I added the four last lines by way of giving a turn to the theme of the poem, such as it is. (*See* page 72, Vol. IV.)

303. *Hughie Graham.*

There are several editions of this ballad. This, here inserted, is from an oral tradition in Ayrshire, where, when I was a boy, it was a popular song. It originally had a simple old tune, which I have forgotten.

308. *A Southland Jenny.**

This is a popular Ayrshire song, though the notes were never taken down before. It, as well as many of the ballad tunes in this collection, was written down from Mrs. Burns's voice.

312. *My Tocher's the Jewel.*

This tune is claimed by Nathaniel Gow. It is notoriously taken from "The Muckin o' Geordie's Byre." It is also to be found, long prior to Nathaniel Gow's era, in Aird's selection of Airs and Marches, the first edition, under the name of "The Highway to Edinburgh." (*See* page 60, Vol. IV.)

313. *Then Gudewife count the lawin.*

The chorus of this is part of an old song, one stanza of which I recollect :—

"Every day my wife tells me
That ale and brandy will ruin me,
But if gude liquor be my dead,
This shall be written on my head—
Landlady, count the lawin," &c.

(*See* page 147, Vol. III.)

315. *There'll never be Peace till Jamie comes hame.*

This tune is sometimes called "There are few gude fellows when Willie's awa." But I never have been able to meet in with anything else of the song than the title. (*See* page 22, Vol. IV.)

321. *I do confess thou art so fair.*

This song is altered from a poem by Sir Robert Ayton, private secretary to Mary and Anne, Queens of Scotland. The poem is to be found in "Watson's collection of Scots Poems," the earliest collection printed in Scotland. I think that I have improved the simplicity of the sentiments by giving them a Scots dress. (*See* page 97, Vol. IV.)

323. *The Sodger Laddie.*

The first verse of this is old; the rest is by Ramsay. The tune seems to be the same with a slow air, called "Jackey Hume's Lament," or "The Hollin Buss," or "Ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?"

324. *Where wad bonie Annie lie.*

The old name of this tune is "Whare'll our Gudeman lie?" A silly old stanza of it ran thus :—

* First published by Ramsay in his "Tea-table Miscellany."

"O whare'll our Gudeman lie, Gudeman lie, Gudeman lie,
O whare'll our Gudeman lie, till he shute o'er the simmer?
Up amang the hen-bawks, the hen-bawks, the hen-bawks,
Up amang the hen-bawks, amang the rotten timmer."

325. *Galloway Tam.*

I have seen an interlude acted at a wedding, to this tune, called "The wooing of the Maiden." These entertainments are now much worn out in this part of Scotland. Two are still retained in Nithsdale, viz., "Sully puir Auld Glenae," and this one, "The wooing of the Maiden."

326. *As I cam down by yon castle wa'.*

This is a very popular Ayrshire song.

327. *Lord Ronald, my Son.*

This air, a very favorite one in Ayrshire, is evidently the original of "Lochaber." In this manner most of our finest more modern airs have had their origin. Some early minstrel composed the simple, artless original air; which being picked up by the more learned musician, took the improved form it bears.

328. *O'er the moor amang the heather.*

This song is the composition of a Jean Glover, a girl who was not only a wh——, but also a thief; and in one or other character has visited most of the Correction Houses in the west. She was born, I believe, in Kilmarnock. I took the song down from her singing as she was strolling through the country, with a slight-of-hand blackguard.

330. *To the Rosebud.*

"All hail to thee, thou balmy bud."

This song is the composition of a Mr. Johnson, a joiner in the neighborhood of Belfast. The tune is by Oswald, altered evidently from "Johnie's Grey Breeks."

331. *Yon wild mossy mountains.*

This tune is by Oswald. The song alludes to a part of my private history, which it is of no consequence to the world to know. (*See* page 54, Vol. II.)

332. *Jinglin Johnie.*

(Already discussed, under No. 21.)

333. *It is na, Jean, thy bonie face.*

These words were originally English verses; I gave them their Scots dress. (*See* page 23, Vol. III.)

336. *Eppie M'Nab.*

The old song with this title has more wit than decency. (*See* page 58, Vol. IV.)

337. *Wha is that at my bower door?*

This tune is also known by the name of "Lass an I come near thee." The words are mine. (*See* page 56, Vol. I.)

338. *Thou art gane away frae me, Mary.*

This tune is the same with "Haud awa frae me, Donald."

340. *The tears I shed must ever fall.*

This song of genius was composed by a Miss Cranstoun. It wanted four lines to make all the stanzas suit the music, which I added, and are the first four of the last stanza.*

341. *The bonie wee Thing.*

Composed on my little idol—"The charming, lovely Davies." (*See* page 36, Vol. IV.)

345. *The tither morn.*

This tune is originally from the Highlands. I have heard a Gaelic song to it, which I was told was very clever, but not by any means a lady's song. (*See* page 57, Vol. IV.)

361. *My Collier Laddie.*

I do not know a blyther old song than this. (*See* page 102, Vol. IV.)

373. *A Posie to my ain dear May.*

It appears evident to me that Oswald composed his "Roslin Castle" on the modulation of this air. In the second part of Oswald's, in the first three bars, he has either hit on a wonderful similarity to, or else he has entirely borrowed the first three bars of the old air; and the close of both tunes is almost exactly the same. The old verses to which it was sung, when I took down

* See page 118, Vol. IV. This authoress, in July 1790, became the second wife of Professor Dugald Stewart.

the notes from a country girl's voice, had no great merit. The following is a specimen :—

There was a pretty May, and a milkin she went,
  Wi her red rosy cheeks, and her coal-black hair;
And she met a young man a comin o'er the bent,
  *With a double and adieu to thee fair May.**

O where are ye goin, my ain pretty maid,
  Wi thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black hair?
Unto the yowes a milkin', kind sir, she said,
  [For its rolling on the dew makes the milkmaids fair?]

What if I gang alang wi thee, my ain pretty maid,
  Wi thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black hair?
Wad I be aught the warse o' that, kind sir, she said,
  [An' its rolling on the dew makes the milkmaids fair.]†

O tell me thy fortune, my ain pretty maid,
  With thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black hair!
My face it is my fortune, and quite enough, she said,
  O its rolling on the dew makes the milkmaids fair.

I fear I cannot marry thee, my ain pretty maid,
  With thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black hair!
You'll wait until I ask you, silly sir, she said,
  It is rolling on the dew makes the milkmaids fair!

448. *The bonie lass made the bed to me.*

This was composed on an amour of Charles II. when sculking in the North, about Aberdeen, in the time of the Usurpation. He formed *une petite affaire* with a daughter of the House of Portletham, who was "the lass that made the bed" to him.‡ (*See* page 83, Vol. VI.)

The foregoing annotations were twice published by Cromek, first in the "Reliques," 1808, and next in two volumes, produced in 1810, under the title of "SELECT SCOTTISH SONGS, ancient and modern, with critical observations and Biographical notices by ROBERT BURNS." The text of the songs was em-

* The "country girl" from whose singing the words were noted down, had only caught the *sound* of the proper refrain here, which goes thus:—

"And its rolling on the dew makes the milkmaids fair!"

† Burns omitted the two verses which complete the song; some of our readers will recognise this ballad as a Scotch version of an old English one, having the same point:—"My face it is my fortune."

‡ The footnote to song XXI. will account for this annotation by Burns to a song which was not published till after his death.

braced in the latter work, and, with the assistance of Allan Cunningham, a considerable number of fresh notes, and songs not contained in *Johnson*, were introduced to swell the volumes, which *externally* present a very handsome appearance. Unfortunately, however, several of the head-notes given there as the work of Burns, seem to be the deliberate manufacture of Cromek's young co-adjutor. The result has been very confusing; for some of these spurious remarks on Song are quoted as utterances of Burns down to the present day. The poet's manuscript of the genuine notes is still in existence; but we have not succeeded in getting access to it. Nevertheless, without obtaining the advantage of a collation, we can, from the mere style and matter of the spurious notes, point them out with tolerable precision. Those readers who possess Cromek's "Select Scottish Songs" may look at and beware of the headnotes to the following:—

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We observed in a newspaper notice that in 1870, the four interesting volumes of Johnson's *Museum*, in which Burns inserted his annotations for Captain Riddell, were exposed for sale by Mr. John Salkeld, London, along with some other books from the Riddell collection, at the upset price of one hundred and ten guineas. An examination of these would at once confirm or disprove the correctness of our surmises concerning the preceding black list.

The reference to "Mrs. Whelpdale," in the poet's note to Song 301, proves that these annotations were not finished till the latter part of 1793. When Cromek's *Reliques of Burns*

first appeared, the "Remarks on Scottish Songs" was the portion which attracted most attention from lovers of ballad-literature. We have seen a letter addressed by Henry Mackenzie to Dr. Anderson of Edinburgh, which thus gives an estimate of the work:—"I thank you particularly for the *Reliques of Burns*, which are undoubtedly genuine, and breathe the same genius, and the same infirmities, with his former works. I will say a little of it. More science and better company, with his father's worth and sound principles, would have made him one of the best poets this country has produced. He is a bigot for laxity, religious and moral; and hence that jumble of sentiments! After telling me of his father's conversion to Socinianism, he added—'but he continued a *Calvinist* in his manners and conversation.' The thing I like best in these *Reliques* is the account of Scottish Songs, which coincides with my own sentiments and theories. His curt, sarcastic remarks are truly characteristic; although some of them may be a little inaccurate."

THE GLENRIDDELL MSS.

AMONG the friends whom Burns treasured in "his heart of heart" none ranked higher than Robert Riddell of Glenriddell. Burns thus refers to him in a note to his song "The day returns, my bosom burns:" "I composed this song out of compliment to one of the worthiest married couples in the world—Robert Riddell, Esq., of Glenriddell, and his lady. At their fireside I have enjoyed more pleasant evenings than at all the houses of fashionable people in this country put together: and to their kindness and hospitality I am indebted for many of the happiest hours of my life." (*See* page 18, Vol. III.)

Captain Riddell was in some respects a kindred spirit with Burns, a poet and a lover of poetry. Burns delighted to consult him on his literary performances, prose and poetry; and wrote for the pleasure and advice of Captain Riddell copies of the letters and poems which have subsequently become known as The Glenriddell MSS.

On the death of Burns they were entrusted by the descendants of Captain Riddell to Dr. Currie, who edited the first complete edition of the poet's works in 1800. After Currie's death they passed into the hands of his son, the late William Wallace Currie, by whose widow they were presented to the Liverpool Athenæum Library. The complete catalogue of those MSS. will be found on the following four pages.

THE GLENRIDDELL MSS. OF BURNS'S POEMS,

IN THE ATHENÆUM LIBRARY, LIVERPOOL.

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5. The Belles of Mauchline.†
6. Epistle to John Goldie, in Kilmarnock.†
7. Extempore to Mr. M'Adam of Craigengillan.
8. Inscription—"Once fondly loved, and still remembered."
9. Extempore stanzas on Naething.
10. Verses on the death of John Macleod, Esq.
11. On the death of Sir James Hunter Blair, Bart.
12. Copy of the Author's Autobiographical Letter.
13. Lines written by Somebody on a window at Stirling.
14. Written in the Hermitage at Taymouth.
15. Humble Petition of Bruar Water.
16. Lines written at the Fall of Fyers.
17. On Scaring Waterfowl on Loch Turit.
18. Lines by Clarinda—On Burns saying he had "nothing else to do."†
19. Answer to the foregoing—extempore.†
20. The Chevalier's Birthday Ode, 31 Dec. 1787.
21. On the death of Lord President Dundas.†
22. Lines written at Friars Carse Hermitage, 1st version.†
23. Song—"Anna, thy charms," &c.†
24. Lines written at Friars Carse Hermitage, 2nd version.
25. First Epistle to Mr. Graham of Fintry—"When Nature," &c.
26. Ode on Mrs. Oswald of Auchincruive.
27. Address to Miss Cruikshank—"Beauteous Rosebud."†
28. Ode to the departed Regency Bill.†
29. A new Psalm for the Chapel of Kilmarnock.†
30. Epigram on Captain Grose.†
31. On Captain Grose's peregrinations.†
32. The Kirk of Scotland's Alarm.†
33. Lines to Mr. Graham of Fintry—"I call no Goddess."†
34. The Whistle—a Ballad.†
35. The Five Carlines—a Ballad.†

36. Song—"Yestreen I had a pint o' wine."†
37. Song—"I murder hate by flood and field."†
38. Election Ballad—"Fintry my stay in worldly strife."†
39. Ken ye ought o' Captain Grose?†
40. Tam o' Shanter—a Tale.
41. Sweet Flow'ret, pledge o' meikle luve.†
42. Lament of Mary, Queen of Scots.
43. Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn.†
44. Lines to Sir John Whitefoord.†
45. On Glenriddell's Fox breaking his chain.†
46. Second Epistle to Mr. Graham of Fintry—"Late crippled."†
47. Grace before Dinner—"O Thou, who kindly," &c.†

EPIGRAMS.*

48. Ask why God made the gem so small.†
49. That there is falsehood in his looks.†
50. Light lay the earth on Billy's breast.
51. Stop thief! dame Nature called to Death.†
52. What Lascelles thought fit from this world.†
53. If you rattle along like your Mistress's tongue.†
54. Here lies John Bushby, *honest* man.†
55. When Morine deceas'd, to the devil went down.†
56. Bless Jesus Christ, O Cardoness!†

Those pieces marked thus †, are in the poet's autograph. The others are in the handwriting of an amanuensis, who was a young Licentiate of the Church; but his name is nowhere indicated.

THE GLENRIDDELL MSS. OF BURNS'S LETTERS.

IN THE ATHENÆUM LIBRARY, LIVERPOOL.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE CONTENTS.

1. Abridged copy of the Author's first Common-place Book.
2. To John Arnot of Dalquhatswood, Esq., April 1786.
3. To Mrs. Stewart of Stair, 1786.

* Burns seems to have finished his work of transcribing these poems in Mr. Riddell's book before leaving Ellisland about the close of the year 1791. The Epigrams, however, must have been added, on receiving back the book, after Mr. Riddell's death, in April 1794. The color of the ink and different character of penmanship seems to infer this fact; but the introduction of the ill-natured epigram, No. 53, against Mrs. Walter Riddell, renders the matter certain.

4. To Miss Wilhelmina Alexander, enclosing song "The Lass o' Ballochmyle," 18 Nov. 1786.
5. To Mr. Wm. Nicol, of the High School, Edinburgh, 1 June 1787.
6. To John M'Murdo, Esq., Drumlanrig, with a song, January 1789.
7. To my friend Cunningham, on his severe love-disappointment, 24 Jan. 1789.
8. To the Right Hon. William Pitt—an Address from the Scottish Distillers, Feb. 1789.
9. To Miss H. C———, (Craik) "1789 or 90."
10. To Crawford Tait, Esq., W.S., 15 Oct. 1790.
11. To Charles Sharpe, Esq., of Hoddam, April 22, 1791.
12. To Alex. Cunningham, Esq., Edinburgh, introducing Clarke the Schoolmaster, June 1791.
13. Letter dictated from Clarke, addressed to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, June 1791.
14. To the Rev. Mr. Moodie, Edinburgh, in behalf of Clarke, the Schoolmaster, June 1791.
15. To Miss Davies, enclosing a ballad I had made on her, [July] 1791.
16. Letter dictated for Clarke, to Mr. Williamson, factotum and favorite of the Earl of Hopetoun, 1791.
17. To Mr. Corbet, Supervisor-General of Excise, 1791.
18. To Mr. Smellie, printer, Edinburgh, introducing Mrs. Walter Riddell, Jan. 1792.
19. To the Duke of Queensberry, with "The Whistle," 1792.
20. To Mr. Alex. Cunningham, Writer, Edinburgh, some little time after his marriage, Sep. 10, 1792.
21. To Mr. Corbet, Supervisor-General of Excise—thanks for granting request in No. 17, Sep. 1792.
22. Letter from Mr. Nicol, alluding to some temeraire conduct of mine in the political opinions of the day, 10 Feb. 1790.
23. Reply to the foregoing, Feb. 1792.
24. Letter to a Lady, (Clarinda), March 1793. *I suppose, my dear Madam.*

    (Never scrolled, but copied from the original letter.)*
25. To the Earl of Glencairn (with copy of my new edition), 1793.
26. To John F. Erskine, Esq., of Mar, 13th April 1793.
27. To Miss Lesley Baillie of Mayfield, 1793.
28. To Miss M'Murdo, with a Ballad, made in compliment to her, July 1793.

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* In Dr. Currie's hand, a note occurs here :—

"These Letters appear to be nearly the worst he wrote.—J. C."

[The following autograph note by Burns at the end of letter No. 12, to Dr. Moore, is very characteristic; it doubtless refers to the "young Licentiate of the Church" in note page 414, *supra*:—]

"Know all whom it may concern, that I, the Author, am not answerable for the false spelling and injudicious punctuation in the foregoing transcript of my letter to Dr. Moore I have something generous in my temper that cannot bear to see or hear the Absent wronged, and I am very much hurt to observe that in several instances the transcriber has injured and mangled the proper name and principal title of a Personage of the very first distinction in all that is valuable among men—antiquity, abilities and power; (virtue, everybody knows, is an obsolete business) I mean, the Devil. Considering that the transcriber was one of the clergy, an order who owe the very bread they eat to the said Personage's exertions, the affair was absolutely unpardonable.—Ro. B."

On the title-page of this volume is the inscription—"LETTERS BY MR. BURNS, which he selected for Robt. Riddell, Esq., of Glenriddell, F.A.S. of London and Edinburgh, and member of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester." Under the title is pasted down an impression of Beugo's engraved head of the Bard, beneath which is written in ornamental letters—

"Robertus Burns, Scotus."

As will be seen by a reference to the letters to Miss —— and David Hill, pages 134 and 135, Vol. VI., these prose MS. copies of letters, which, though intended for Robert Riddell, were never delivered to him (see letter to Hill); therefore, by the publication of the letter to Hill referred to, we somewhat unsettle the title "Glenriddell MSS.," so far as the letters are concerned.—G. G.

Pasted on the inside of the board is the following holograph letter of the widow of Dr. Currie's son, Mr. Wallace Currie:—

"TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE ATHENÆUM, LIVERPOOL.

ELLERSLIE, *Dec.* 6, 1853.

SIR,—Will you allow me to make you the medium of presenting to the Athenæum Library two Manuscript Books in his own writing, of Poems and Letters of Burns. I believe they came into possession of Dr. Currie when he was engaged in writing the Life of the Poet, and I shall feel gratified by their finding a place in the Library of an Institution in which he took so great an interest.—I am, Sir, your obedient Servant, S. CURRIE."

END OF VOL. V.

Burns, Robert

DATE DUE			

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